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BIBLE BIOGRAPHY;

A SERIES OF

CONNECTED HISTORIES

OF

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

MENTIONED IN THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.

BY EDWARD FARR,

*AUTHOR OF A NEW VERSION OF
THE PSALMS.*



LONDON:

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INTRODUCTION

NEXT to an actual intercourse with mankind, nothing has so great an influence upon the expanding intellect of the young, as an acquaintance with the lives of the departed. Place constantly before one youth, memoirs of the wise and the virtuous, and before another, those of the merely witty and profane, and we are taught by observation, that their after-conduct will display the effects of their different readings. How anxious, then, ought parents and teachers to be in the choice of books in this department of literature for their children and pupils; and how carefully ought they to select those that are the most instructive, and that exhibit the best models for imitation. And, where shall we find such instructive examples, such models of excellence, as are furnished in the lives of those holy men, whose histories are interspersed throughout the sacred pages of the Bible? From such examples we may learn how to choose the good, and to refuse the evil; how to act towards God and man, and how to behave under all the multifarious circumstances to which we are subject in this life. Nor is this all; the conduct with which we are thus made acquainted has received the approbation or disapprobation of Him, who is "of purer

eyes than to behold iniquity :” by this knowledge, therefore, we may test our own conduct, whether it be pleasing in His sight, and may prove ourselves, whether we be in the faith.

In the delineation of those characters whose words and actions are recorded for our edification and guidance, there is not a lurking passion suffered to remain undetected, nor a motive that can influence our conduct, whose effects are not displayed in the history of another ; so that while his sentence is passed, we feel our own personal condemnation. Thus, Abraham, “the friend of God,” is placed before us in the weakness of his equivocation, as well as in the strength of his faith ; Balaam, the adversary of Israel, is delineated in all the intellectual grandeur of his mind, and his sins are recorded in the same clear language ; David, also, the “man after God’s own heart,” is represented wandering in the paths of iniquity, as well as at the altar pouring out his soul in exalted strains of triumphant praise. The whole of these instructive lessons are placed before us in order to impress upon our minds the charms of truth and virtue, and to win us to the paths of righteousness.

Of what high importance is it, then, that our sons and our daughters should become thoroughly acquainted with such characters ; and yet, how few, when they arrive at maturity, have a sufficiently accurate knowledge of them, or duly estimate the value of the examples furnished expressly for their guidance through this world. They read of them in the Bible, it is true ; but the real characters are

too frequently undiscerned by youthful readers, though clear and palpable to the systematic Biblical student.

In order, therefore, to supply a work for general reading in schools and families, which, while it delights the youthful reader by its interest, shall gradually unfold to him the most exemplary incidents in the lives of the leading personages of the Holy Scriptures, the present volume has been undertaken. The writer has himself, in common, he believes, with many other instructors of youth, long felt the want of such a work, and in attempting to supply the deficiency, his most anxious care has been to gather up the fragments scattered abroad in the sacred pages, and to concentrate the different features of each individual history. He has also endeavoured to make the work as interesting as possible, by collecting together much illustrative and pleasing matter relating to particular incidents;—to elucidate character;—to display the beauties and the truths of Holy Writ;—and, he would fain hope, to show forth also the glory of its Author, God!

BIBLE BIOGRAPHY.

A D A M.

Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
Godlike erect, with native honour clad,
In naked majesty seemed lords of all:
And worthy seemed; for in their looks divine
The image of their glorious Maker shone,
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure,
(Severe, but in true filial freedom placed,)
Whence true authority in men; though both
Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed;
For contemplation he and valour formed;
For softness she and sweet attractive grace;
He for God only, she for God in him.—MILTON.

DIED, A.M. 930.

THE beings thus beautifully described by the poet were the parents of the human race. After God had created this stupendous globe, with everything thereon “pleasant to the eye, and good for food;” he formed man out of the dust of the ground, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and endued him with a rational and upright soul, which resembled its Maker; “in the image of God made he man.”

When created, the man was stationed in the garden of Eden, “to dress it.” Where this garden was situated, is a matter of dispute: Mohammedans believe it was in one of the seven heavens, from whence Adam was cast down upon the earth after his fall; some place it in the third,

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others in the fourth; some within the orbit of the moon, others within the moon itself; some in the middle regions of the earth; some on the earth, and others within the earth: of the two most probable conjectures, one fixes the terrestrial paradise in Armenia, between the sources of the Euphrates, Tigris, Phasis, and Araxes; and the other identifies it with the country between Bagdad and Bussorah.

Wherever it might have been, we learn it was a lovely spot; a garden where

Out of the fertile ground, God caused to grow
All trees of noblest kind. MILTON.

Of the fruit of all these trees, Adam was permitted to partake, save one, which stood in the midst of the garden, and which was placed there as a test of the obedience he owed his Creator, and to render him the more attentive; to remind him of his fallible nature, and that his happiness consisted only in the enjoyment of the favour of his God.

On the day of his creation, Adam was constituted lord of all the living creatures that moved upon the face of the earth; they were convened before him, and he showed his authority by naming them.

But the happiness of Adam was not complete. God was indeed his friend, and oft held intercourse with him; the angels also visited him; yet one object was wanting to complete his felicity. The fowls of the air and the beasts of the earth had their mates; but for the man, there was not found a helpmate for him. The Almighty therefore cast him into a deep sleep, and mysteriously wrought a beautiful woman out of his frame; enduing her also, by his life-giving power, with a rational and upright soul. When formed, she was presented unto Adam, who received her affectionately as his wife, calling her "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh," and designating her woman, which is significant of her origin.

For a short time Adam and his wife lived in perfect harmony, innocent and happy; but, alas! this blissful state did not long continue. Satan, who had been expelled from the mansions of glory for rebellion, had made his

way to earth, and, seeing the happiness of these lovely creatures, envied them, and resolved to effect their ruin:

. Aside the devil turned
For envy, yet with jealous leer malign
Eyed them askance. MILTON.

To complete this base design, he entered into a serpent, the most subtle of all the animal tribes. Clothed in this shape, finding the woman alone, he conferred with her, tempting her to suspect the meaning and certainty of the divine interdict, and to eat of the forbidden fruit, assuring her it would elevate them to divinity. Wrought upon by his persuasive words, the woman complied, and Adam, solicited by her, took part thereof and ate likewise. No sooner had they thus transgressed, than guilt seized on their consciences; evil passions were aroused in their breasts, and shame for the first time covered each face; and they sewed or twisted the leaf-stems of fig-leaves together, and made themselves a covering.

Hitherto it had been a source of the purest delight to Adam to meet and converse with his Maker. But it was so no more:

. The voice of God they heard
Now walking in the garden, by soft winds
Brought to their ears, while day declined; they heard,
And from his presence hid themselves among
The thickest trees. MILTON.

But no shade hideth from the eye of omniscience. God called for Adam, and demanded why he fled? why he was ashamed? and why he had eaten of the forbidden fruit? To the first demand, he replied, "I heard thy voice in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself;" thus indirectly acknowledging his guilt; to the latter, in a spirit of cowardice, he threw the blame upon Eve, casting even a reflection upon his Maker for such a gift: "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat;" thus meanly endeavouring to excuse himself from all blame in the transaction, by a subterfuge which served only to aggravate his offence. This was the first lie told

upon the earth, except Satan's, in enticing the woman; well may he then be called "the father of lies;" for had he not by his lies tempted man to disobedience, this hateful sin had been unknown; the woman, however, when charged with it, told the simple truth: "The serpent beguiled me."

And now, *that* God who had hitherto appeared to Adam only as a God of love, appeared as a God of judgment: after passing a sentence of ruin upon Satan and his agents, by means of the seed of the woman, and of affliction upon the serpent, the instrument of his deceit; he passed a sentence of painful childbirth upon the woman and her female offspring; and upon Adam and his posterity, a curse of thorns and briers upon their fields, with sweat and toil; with death and a return to dust.

This threatening on Satan implied a promise of redemption by the blood of Christ; and God, therefore, instructed Adam in the use and signification of typical sacrifices: so true it is, that in the midst of judgment God remembers mercy. Pitying the wretched offenders, he clothed them with the skins of animals, such probably as had been offered in sacrifice; this denoted their restoration by the imputed righteousness of the loving Saviour:

. He clad
 Their nakedness with skins of beasts—
 Nor he their outward only with the skins
 Of beasts, but inward nakedness, much more
 Opprobrious, with his robe of righteousness.—MILTON.

To testify his wrath against sin, and to prevent their touching the tree of life, they were expelled their blissful abode to cultivate the fields eastward; and to prevent their re-entrance, the symbols of divine wrath hovered over the east gate of the garden.

Soon after their expulsion, Eve bare her first-born, whom, in the abundance of her joy, she named Cain, which signifies "possession;" fondly hoping he was the promised seed which was to bruise the serpent's head; but she soon discovered that her hopes were illusive.

Hence, when she brought forth her second son, she gave him the name of Abel, which signifies "vanity."

These were taught by Adam to sacrifice to the Lord; but they proved a source of trouble to their parents, who were now to witness the evils which sin had introduced into the world, and upon their race, in the persons of their offspring. One was taken away from them by death, and the other by banishment; the particulars of which are related in the next lives. This was a deep affliction to the parents; but they were not left without consolation.

After this, Eve bare another son, whom she named Seth; "for God," said she, "hath appointed me another son in the room of Abel, whom Cain slew;" other children were also born to Adam. At length, the sentence pronounced against him for his transgression was accomplished; after seeing his descendants spread over the earth, at the age of nine hundred and thirty years, he yielded up his spirit into the hands of God who gave it, and his body returned to his native dust.

Many fables are related of Adam, by Jewish and heathen writers; but Scripture, our infallible guide, represents him as a covenant-breaker, as a source of guilt and death to his posterity, and yet as a figure of Him who was to come; "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

CAIN AND ABEL.

His eyes he opened, and beheld a field
 Part arable and tilth, whereon were sheaves
 New reaped; and other part sheep-walks and folds;
 I' the midst an altar as the land-mark stood,
 Rustic, of grassy sord; thither anon
 A sweaty reaper from his tillage brought
 First fruits, the green ear, and the yellow sheaf,
 Unculled, as came to hand; a shepherd next,
 More meek, came with the firstlings of his flock,
 Choicest and best; then, sacrificing, laid
 The inwards and their fat, with incense strowed,
 On the cleft wood, and all due rites performed:
 His offering soon propitious fire from heaven
 Consumed with nimble glance, and grateful steam;
 The other's not, for his was not sincere;
 Whereat he inly raged, and, as they talked,
 Smote him into the midriff with a stone
 That beat out life; he fell; and deadly pale,
 Groaned out his soul with gushing blood effused.—MILTON.

Abel was murdered about A. M. 130. When the death of Cain
 happened is unknown.

THE fruits of the mutual transgression of Adam and Eve soon appeared, and very bitter they were. As Cain, their firstborn, grew up to manhood, his temper disclosed a ferocity which convinced them that the fond hopes they had entertained of his being the promised seed were fallacious; that he was indeed, as Saint John observed, "of the wicked one."

The earth, now no longer bringing forth fruit as it was wont spontaneously, required tillage; this was Cain's occupation, and we may readily imagine that in that rude age, when the use of iron and other metals was unknown, it could have been no easy task. This probably tended to increase the gloom of his natural disposition. It might also be heightened by the reflection that he was eating his bread by the sweat of his brow, not for his own, but for the crimes of his parents.

Abel, the second man born into the world, was a shepherd, and he was of a disposition the very reverse of his brother, meek and religious; he was beloved of God, and delighted in by his parents. This Cain, with an envious eye, observed; and attributed it to partiality, nor was it with an envious eye alone that he discovered it; revenge lurked in his bosom, and it only waited for some signal favour shown, by heaven or his parents, towards Abel, to be called into action.

This was not long wanting: Adam had carefully instructed his children in their religious duties towards their Creator, nor does it appear that Cain was so lost to a sense of his duty as to neglect the outward act of worship. When the earth had brought forth fruit abundantly, Cain erected an altar, "and offered thereon an offering to the Lord;" Abel also brought an offering of the firstlings of his flock, as an atonement: "and the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and his offering he had not respect." A flame from heaven descended upon the altar of Abel and consumed the victim, manifestly betokening the favour of heaven toward the worshipper; not so did it descend on the altar Cain had erected; his offering remained unconsumed, and why? because it was not accompanied by the heart, and because that heart was a prey to discontent and envy, to jealousy and hatred.

From a distance, Cain saw the grateful cloud ascending from his brother's altar towards heaven, but instead of being humbled to the dust with a sense of his own unworthiness, as he ought to have been, he was excited to revenge; "His countenance fell, and he was very wroth." While in this state, God condescended to reason with him thus: "Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." Here was the choice set before Cain, and it was his to choose the right or wrong; that he might be left without excuse, and that he might be induced to

amend and find acceptance with his Maker, a promise was added, that should he make a right choice, he should hold the pre-eminence over his brother; but notwithstanding this right of primogeniture, which was considered in early ages invaluable, including a degree of sovereignty; notwithstanding the solemn warning, and the gracious declaration of the Almighty, Cain was still bent upon revenge. Concealing his feelings, he took his brother aside and discoursed with him in seeming friendship, but he soon threw off the mask; "it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against him and slew him:"

. The unjust the just hath slain,
For envy that his brother's offering found
From heaven acceptance. MILTON.

The first man on whom the sentence of death fell was a martyr for his religion.

After Cain had committed the sanguinary deed, it is probable he endeavoured to hide it from the eye of man, but he could not conceal his guilt from heaven; the eye of omniscience had marked the tragic scene; and the arm of omnipotence was soon stretched forth to take vengeance on the offender. Addressing Cain, a voice from heaven demanded, "Where is Abel thy brother?" One would have supposed that such a demand would have made the culprit tremble, but the heart of Cain was as an adamant; he had the boldness to utter a falsehood in the face of his Maker: "I know not," he replied; "am I my brother's keeper?"

God now proceeded to accuse him of the crime, and to pass sentence upon him. "What," he asked, "hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." Here nature is represented as setting her face against the fratricide; the earth is said to harden her bosom against

him, and the ground receives another curse to him on account of his transgression; it was not to yield her strength to reward his labours.

Wretched indeed is that man who is at enmity with God: by day he is afraid, and his thoughts are ever pondering on his crimes and their results; by night, when his eyelids are closed in sleep, and his bodily senses are sealed up, in his dreams he reviews his guilt, and fearful visions disturb his troubled soul: thus it was with Cain: "My punishment is greater than I can bear." He writhed under the lash, and yet he repented not; he complained of the punishment, and yet expressed no sorrow for his sin; the sorrow he expressed flowed not from compunction, but from the dread of vengeance: "I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; every one that findeth me shall slay me." Here the Lord mercifully interposed, and assured him that sevenfold vengeance should be taken on the man who stretched forth his hand against him, and to prevent it, he set a mark upon the fugitive by which he should be known wherever he might wander; this we are told was to the east of Eden, into the land of Nod, so called after the wanderer; Nod signifying vagabond.

To this part of the Mosaic history, infidels have started objections. "What!" say they; "did Cain fear being slain by the hand of man while the world was as yet unpeopled?" A few words will show the futility of such an objection. Abel, when he died, was one hundred and twenty-five years of age; and when we consider that the first blessing pronounced upon man, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth," contained an injunction to that purpose, when we consider also, that Abel was an example of righteousness, we cannot suppose that he was unmindful of this primary command of his Creator. His descendants were, therefore, numerous; and hence, Cain had sufficient reason to dread the vengeance of his fellow men, inasmuch as they were the injured offspring of the unoffending brother whom he slew.

After wandering about many years, at the head of a considerable tribe, the fugitive at length settled in the east, and built a city, calling it after the name of his son Enoch.

With his remaining history and fate the Scriptures leave us unacquainted. We read, however, that polygamy first began in his tribe; and that the second murder was committed by his sixth son, Lamech; so fatal is the evil example of a parent to his children. We read also that his family increased and was extended over a great part of the world, and that they continued till the Deluge, in seven generations, famous for their skill in arts, and noted for impiety.

Much instruction may be gathered from this narrative: It teaches us to guard against discontent and envy, against jealousy and hatred, lest they should destroy those cords of humanity which bind us unto man, and those principles which lift our hearts to God, lest they cover us with shame, and transmit our names, as they have the name of Cain, to the latest generation, as the name of an object accursed of God and detested by man.

Abel being dead yet speaketh: in him we discern the beauty of holiness, and by it are taught to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, that so we may be crowned, as he is, with immortality and honour in the world to come.

ENOCH.

But he, the seventh from thee, whom thou beheld'st,
 The only righteous in a world perverse,
 And therefore hated, therefore so beset
 With foes, for daring single to be just,
 And utter odious truth, that God would come
 To judge them with his saints: him, the Most High,
 Rapt in a balmy cloud with winged steeds
 Did, as thou saw'st, receive to walk with God
 High in salvation and the climes of bliss,
 Exempt from death; to shew thee what reward
 Awaits the good.

MILTON.

BORN A. M. 622. TRANSLATED 987.

WHILE the lives of some, and even those of wicked men, stand recorded in the sacred page at full length, many eminent servants of God are passed by almost unnoticed; thus it is with the patriarch Enoch; but though little is recorded of him, sufficient is said to excite our admiration for his character, and our veneration for his name.

Enoch, the seventh in degree from Adam, was the son of Jared, and was born in the year of the world Six hundred and twenty-three; hence he was contemporary with Adam, and doubtless enjoyed opportunities of receiving instruction from his lips on the important subjects of the creation, the fall, and the promise; nor were these instructions lost upon him; they filled his mind with wisdom, and directed his earthly course aright.

An ancient author affirms that Enoch was the father of astronomy, and Eusebius considers him to be the Atlas of Grecian mythology; but the fame of Enoch rests upon a better foundation than upon astronomical skill. Noble and divine as that science is, tending as it does to lift the thoughts of man from nature up to nature's

God, to walk with God as Enoch did, is a course far more exalted, and brings infinitely more honour to him who pursues it, than he could obtain in the pursuit of earthly wisdom. This is the encomium Scripture has bestowed upon this patriarch: "Enoch walked with God." Not only did he trace his footsteps in creation and providence, but he walked as the friend of the Almighty; there was between them a cordial sympathy and mutual love: not contented with the outward form of godliness, his soul was filled with love to God, he lived as in his sight, rendering up his faculties of body and mind to his service; and, to reward him for this devotedness, he was admitted to an intimate acquaintance with his Creator.

In the days of Enoch mankind were lamentably corrupt and idolatrous; iniquity had spread over the whole face of nature, but amidst this gloomy scene he was a bright exception; his life was such as to obtain this testimony: "that he pleased God." This he did not only by his exemplary life, but by his faith; Saint Paul, speaking of him, says, "By faith, Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Thus we find that Enoch was a believer in Christ, a proof that the Messiah was revealed at this early period. We learn this also from Saint Jude, who speaks of him as preaching Christ to the antediluvian world: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." In this prophecy the day of judgment is clearly and awfully depicted. The Messiah is described as sitting upon his throne of

justice, as the Judge of all the world, rendering to every man according to his works.

To these awarding untold bliss,
To those immeasurable woe.

Where the apostle found this prediction is not certain: there is a treatise ascribed to Enoch, but it rests not on good authority; we are left, therefore, to suppose that this passage was either handed down by tradition, or was in a special manner revealed to him.

Thus was Enoch faithfully employed, discharging his duties toward God and man, regardless of the opposition of a sinful world; till at length, without the pangs of dissolving nature, he was translated from this earthly scene to an inheritance beyond the skies, which fadeth not away.

In the life of Enoch we learn that holiness is acceptable with God, and that he has prepared a mansion of eternal glory for those who love his name. This latter truth God has taught us in three distinct ages of time, by the assumption of the bodies of Enoch, Elijah, and Jesus Christ, into heaven; and it is not only a proof of a future state, but it is also an evidence of the resurrection; for if that which is perishable in itself is *translated* to live for ever in the regions of bliss, "why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should *raise the dead*?" both are miracles alike easy to be performed by Him "who spake a world from nought." Assured of this, let us take the Scriptures for our guide, that we may not fall short of a heavenly habitation; let us walk with God, as Enoch did, in faith and holiness, that we may sit down with him, and the just of all ages, "in the kingdom of God."

NOAH.

At length a reverend sire among them came,
 And of their doings great dislike declared,
 And testified against their ways ; he oft
 Frequented their assemblies, whereso met,
 Triumphs or festivals ; and to them preached
 Conversion and repentance, as to souls
 In prison, under judgments imminent :
 But all in vain : which when he saw, he ceased
 Contending, and removed his tents far off ;
 Then, from the mountain hewing timber tall,
 Began to build a vessel of huge bulk ;
 Measured by cubit, length, and breadth, and heighth,
 Smeared round with pitch ; and in the side a door
 Contrived ; and of provisions laid in large
 For man and beast : when lo, a wonder strange !
 Of every beast, and bird, and insect small,
 Came sevens, and pairs, and entered in as taught
 Their order : last the sire and his three sons,
 With their four wives ; and God made fast the door.—MILTON.

BORN, A. M. 1057. DIED, 2007.

THOUGH the Almighty is merciful, gracious, and slow to anger, toward his sinful race ; though he forbears long with them, restraining his vengeance due from falling upon them ; yet there is a period to his long suffering ; there is a time when justice must vindicate his honour and take the place of mercy : this truth is fully established by the facts recorded in the succeeding narrative.

The patriarch Noah was born at a time of unprecedented wickedness, when man, grown bold in infidelity and crime, dared universally to lift the arm of rebellion against his Creator. He was the son of Lamech, the son of that Methusaleh, of whom we read as living to the age of nine hundred and sixty-nine years ; the father of Methusaleh was that eminent character Enoch, and it is probable, therefore, that Noah had equal privileges with Enoch, by learning from him those great truths which he had

received from Adam. In this we see the wisdom and goodness of God in prolonging the age of man to the length of several hundred years; had his age extended no farther than the fitting period of threescore years and ten, the history of creation, and the important truths of religion, had soon been misrepresented and perverted; as it was, they were transmitted through a long space of time from patriarch to patriarch, in all their purity, until, at length, they were faithfully recorded by the sacred historian.

Noah profited by these high privileges; "he was just and perfect in his generation;" and, like his pious ancestor, he walked with God. But not so did the families of Cain; while one or two pious exceptions are recorded, the rest are described as "grieving the spirit of God" by their iniquities.

For some ages it appears that the offspring of Cain and those of Seth were strangers to each other; the former were distinguished for their gross idolatry, devoting all their skill in arts, for which they were famous, to the corruption of morals and dishonour of God, the latter, for their primitive simplicity and strict adherence to the worship of the one true God; but this division of the antediluvians had now become extinct. "The sons of God," as Scripture terms the sons of Seth, allured by the charms of "the daughters of men," or female descendants of Cain, formed an alliance with them; and by thus breaking down the wall of partition between them, and sacrificing their religious scruples, they became in a short time corrupt as their partners, so that scarce a vestige of true religion remained upon the earth.

The offspring of these fatal marriages were called giants; not men remarkable alone for their stature, as is generally supposed, but for their apostasy, and for sustaining that apostasy by acts of violence and oppression. These were the men,

First seen in acts of prowess eminent
And great exploits, (MILTON,)

seeking to gain power on the earth. Dark is the picture the sacred historian draws of the manners of the world at this period: with the exception of one family, he describes the hearts of the whole race of mankind as being "only evil continually;" that exception was the family of Noah, and amidst this scene of universal depravity Noah was found faithful; both by example and precept he sought to bring them back to God. He was a preacher of righteousness, and he owned fearlessly his divine commission, but his preaching and example were alike slighted; they heard, but heeded not; so true it is, that

Pleasure admitted in undue degree

Enslaves the will, nor leaves the judgment free.—COWPER.

Pleasure was their one pursuit; nor did they scruple to commit the foulest crimes to obtain their object.

At length, the measure of their iniquity was filled: the Almighty had long borne with them; his mercy had spared them many years; he had sent them preachers to warn them of the consequences of their evil doings; but all to no purpose: he, therefore, resolved to punish the offenders. "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."

But the righteous was not to perish with the wicked; the ways of God are right; in the midst of his judgments his people "abide in safety, under the shadow of his wings, until the calamity be overpast." He commanded the patriarch to "build him an ark, to the saving of his house;" giving him direction of what wood the vessel should be made, and how it should be formed: "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without, with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in

the side thereof: with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them."

No sooner had the patriarch received the command, than he commenced the work, knowing that He who gave the word was mighty to perform; Noah was then in the four hundred and eightieth year of his age, and the time employed in its construction was one hundred and eighty years.

To the truth of this story, some object, thinking a part of the building must have decayed before its completion; but the fact that it was made of cypress wood, which has an unrivalled fame for its durability, enduring many ages, and that it was pitched within and without, with a mineral bitumen, which excludes all water, and repels the injuries of worms, sufficiently refutes such an objection.

Much difference of opinion also exists, relating to the form of the ark; the common figures represent it as adapted to progressive motion; but the simple idea given of it in the text, is that of an enormous wooden house, divided into three stories, and having a sloping roof. There are, also, various opinions respecting its size, there being a larger and smaller cubit, the one called the common, and the other the sacred cubit; taking the common, or shortest, the most probable, for the ark, which is about eighteen inches, it has been found that it must have been

of the burden of forty-two thousand four hundred and thirty-two tons; by far the largest vessel ever constructed. This form and size was admirably calculated to make it lie steady on the water without rolling, which might have endangered the lives of the animals within; but made it very unfit for swimming to a distance, or riding in boisterous seas.

During the time of the erection of the ark, Noah was a preacher of righteousness, and condemned the world. By some, doubtless, he was treated as a visionary, pitied by some for his folly, and had in contempt by others for his weakness; but the patriarch regarded them not. Faithful to the divine command, he completed the ark,

To save himself and household from amidst
A world devoted to universal wrack.

MILTON.

It was no sooner completed, than all the animals destined to be preserved, came, as by instinct—the wild and ferocious, the timid and the weak mingling together—into the ark; after them came Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives; and the Lord, tenderly caring for them, “shut them in.”

This was on Saturday, November the twenty-seventh, in the year of the world One thousand Six hundred and fifty-seven; and on that day, or the day following, the flood commenced; the clouds of heaven grew black, the winds howled, torrents of water descended from the skies, while the fountains of the great deep were broken up. We may picture to ourselves the inhabitants of the earth endeavouring to save themselves from the devouring element: many cling to the sides of the ark, and implore a refuge, but their cries are in vain; some rush to the house-tops, others climb the highest trees; these ascend the hills, and those the lofty mountains; but it is all in vain; the mighty waters sweep them all away, the loftiest mountain yields to the devouring element, so that nothing is seen, but

. Above a boundless sky,
 Below one mighty deep, whereon doth float
 A solitary ark.

The memory of this event was common amongst the nations of antiquity, although the circumstances are differently narrated. The Babylonians had an account of a universal deluge, in which all the human race was destroyed, save Xisuthrus and his family; the Greeks say they were all destroyed except Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha; the Druids had a similar legend; so also have the natives of America, and the islands of the Pacific Ocean. Amongst the Hindús, many tales relative to such a catastrophe occur; one is, that the ocean was churned, to recover the valuable things lost in it; and another, in which King Satyavrata, with the seven Kishi or patriarchs, was saved in a ship from the universal destruction.

Forty days did the waters continue to increase; at the end of that time they had reached their greatest height, and soon after they began to abate, but the abatement was slow: this was wisely ordained; had the decrease been as rapid as the increase, it is probable that the surface of the earth would have presented a scene of inaccessible precipices, tremendous rocks, and fathomless depths; instead of the beautifully varied scene of gently rising hills, and spreading vales.

On the eleventh of July, when the days were at the longest, and just before the sun entered the tropical sign of Cancer, the tops of the mountains were first discerned. At the end of forty days, Noah sent forth a raven, to discover whether the earth was dry; the bird, finding nothing to rest upon, returned to the ark, seven days and seven nights; after this, according to Jewish tradition, it went forth, and discovering some carcasses upon the tops of the mountains, it returned not again.

When seven days more had expired, Noah sent forth a dove, a bird remarkable for its strength of wing, and fondness of home; but the dove not finding any rest for the soles of her feet, returned unto the ark; Noah then

waited yet other seven days, at which time he sent out the same dove, which returned with an olive leaf in its mouth, a proof that the waters had gone off, even from the valleys, though as yet, probably from the earth's moisture, it could not rest. At the end of another seven days, the dove was sent forth again, and it returned no more; by this, "Noah knew that the waters were abated."

On the fifth day of the first month, One thousand Six hundred and fifty-eight, Noah removed the covering of the ark, that he might survey the face of the earth; and "behold, it was dry." The sensation the patriarch felt at that moment, must have been at once affecting and delightful; affecting, to look back upon the awful death of his contemporaries, and to see the face of nature so changed, that not a trace of former scenes remained; the garden of Eden was now no more to be seen; its very site was destroyed, and every place endeared by associations of the tenderest kind was erased from the surface of the globe; it was in the memory alone that they now had existence. But if it was affecting to look back on scenes gone by, it was delightful to the mind of the patriarch, to review the mercies of his Creator, who had preserved him and his family amidst this universal wreck of nature; this could not fail to raise in his mind the exalted emotions of "wonder, love, and praise."

Noah, it appears, was not impatient to leave the ark, although he had been confined in it upwards of a year; as he entered it by divine command, so he waited for divine permission to leave it. This was given on November the twenty-seventh, of the same year, and in six days the whole of its inmates were disembarked; the next day he set apart for worship; erecting an altar, he took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered an offering of thanksgiving for his preservation, and for an atonement for his own sins, and for the sins of his family.

This offering was accepted; it is said, "The Lord smelled a sweet savour." Sweet to Him is the sacrifice of

righteousness; acceptable to him the offering of a grateful heart! He therefore declared that he would no more curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of his heart should be evil from his youth. Neither would he again smite any more every living thing as he had done; but that while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, should not cease.

On the same day, the Almighty appeared unto Noah and his sons, and gave them a promise of protection, renewing with them the blessing bestowed upon Adam, with a further grant of animal food for their sustenance, prohibiting only the partaking of the blood, "which is the life thereof." He gave also, at this time, an express command, not to commit murder; and gave power unto man to inquire for blood, and to put the murderer to death, because he put forth his hand against God's own image; "for in the image of God made he man."

After the Almighty had given these laws to Noah and his sons, he entered into a covenant with them

. Never to destroy
The earth again by flood; nor let the sea
Surpass his bounds; nor rain to drown the world.—MILTON.

This he confirmed by a most significant symbol: "And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of the covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: and I will remember my covenant which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."

Some suppose that this "triple-coloured bow" was

unknown to the antediluvian world. The earth, prior to that event, being watered by a mist, there could naturally be no rainbow, it being caused by the refraction of the sun's rays in the drops of falling rain; others imagine that it was a natural phenomenon, and that the text says no more, than that the bow was then appointed as a token of the covenant between God and man; whichever may be right is a matter of small moment,—it is still the token; and who can behold,

. refracted from an Eastern cloud
 Bestriding earth, the grand ethereal bow,
 Shoot up immense, and every hue unfold
 In fair proportion; running from the red
 To where the violet fades into the sky, (THOMSON,)

without feeling, not merely admiration at the sight, but gratitude and love toward a covenant-keeping God?

The ark, it appears, rested on the Mount Ararat, which lies in Armenia; and in the plains below, Noah settled with his family, from whence came all the families of the earth.

After he had left the ark, he “began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard,” from the fruit of which he extracted wine; and being ignorant of its intoxicating qualities, he drank of it till his faculties were overpowered; “and he was uncovered within his tent.”

This led to a very evil display of conduct on the part of Ham, and of affection, of obedience, and modesty on the part of Shem and Japheth, towards their father, for which each received his due reward. In the spirit of prophecy, Noah pronounced a curse upon Ham, and Canaan his son; but he pronounced a blessing on Shem and Japheth. “Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren. Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.”

It was the opinion of the ancient fathers, that a formal distribution of the world was made by Noah, among his

three sons, before any emigration from the first settlement took place; probability is in favour of the supposition; and an Armenian tradition tends to confirm their views; it states that Noah distributed the habitable globe, from north to south, between his sons; giving to Ham the region of Africa; to Shem, the region of Palestine, Arabia, and Syria; and to Japheth, Europe and Asia.

Noah died at the age of nine hundred and fifty years. Saved from the flood by an ark, he now experienced a greater salvation, through faith in the atonement, of which Saint Peter says, the ark was but a type: into this ark let us seek to enter, that when the works of nature and of art shall be burned up, we may be saved. That event will happen suddenly, as in the days of Noah: "They ate, they drank, they married, and were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came and swept them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." And then,—

The world shall burn, and from her ashes spring
New heaven and earth, wherein the just shall dwell.

MILTON.

ABRAHAM.

. Him God the Most High vouchsafed
 To call by vision, from his father's house,
 His kindred, and false gods, into a land
 Which he did show him, and from him did raise
 A mighty nation; and upon him shower
 His benediction so, that in his seed
 All nations shall be blest: he straight obeyed,
 Not knowing to what land, yet firm believed:
 He left his gods, his friends, and native soil,
 Ur of Chaldea, passing now the ford
 To Haran; after him a cumbrous train
 Of herds and flocks, and numerous servitude,
 Not wandering poor, but trusting all his wealth
 To God, who called him, in a land unknown.—MILTON.

BORN, A.M. 2008. DIED, 2185.

AMONG the eminent characters recorded in the Scriptures, no one (the Messiah excepted) is more distinguished than that of Abraham. Not only is he celebrated by the sacred writers for his faith and obedience, but as being the founder of the Jewish nation, and the head of the universal church,—“the father of the faithful;” the Messiah himself honoured him in a very high degree, and Saint James gives him the exalted title of “the friend of God.”

Abram (for that was his original name) was born only two years after the death of Noah, though nine generations intervened between their births. He was a descendant of that patriarch in the line of Shem; his father's name was Terah, and his native place Ur of the Chaldees.

. Oh! that men—
 Canst thou believe? should be so stupid grown,
 While yet the patriarch lived who 'scaped the flood,
 As to forsake the living God, and fall
 To worship their own works in wood and stone
 For gods! MILTON.

Yet so it was. Chaldea, at the time of Abraham's birth,

was overrun with idolatry, and so for ages it continued; they worshipped the sun, the moon, the stars, and figures they themselves created. It was among the Chaldeans that the science of astrology had its origin; in fancy they blended their own works with the glorious works of their Creator.

Among this people Abram received his education, and spent a part of his maturer age. His very parents were idolaters; and it is not improbable that Abram himself bowed the knee to idols. The Jews, it is true, have a tradition that he was thrown into a fiery furnace, from which he escaped unhurt, for condemning the idolatrous practices of his countrymen; on this subject, however, we have no precise information. Scripture merely records his genealogy and his marriage with Sarai, before it speaks of the command given him to separate from all the kindreds of the earth. "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

This command was given in such a manner as to leave no doubt on the mind of Abram that it was from heaven. He therefore obeyed; and he took with him Terah, his aged parent, and Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, together with all his substance. On account of the great age and infirmities of his parent, their first remove was not out of the country; they settled at Haran, a place north-west of Mesopotamia, and which was so called from a deceased brother; here Terah died, at the age of two hundred and five years, a greater age than any of the postdiluvians had as yet attained. Abram, in obedience to the divine command, now removed into Canaan, whither God had before directed him; regardless of his possessions, and of the many tender ties which must have bound his affections to his country, and

superior to the dangers that awaited him among the tribes he must meet with in Canaan, who were often living in hostility with each other; believing in the promise, he obeyed the injunction: with Sarai and Lot, and the substance they had gathered, and the souls they had gotten in Haran, he went forth to go into the land of Canaan. He was then seventy-five years of age.

The distance Abram had to travel was more than three hundred miles, and his road lay through dangerous deserts, and thick forests, and over lofty mountains; but these were no obstacles; steady to his purpose, and, trusting in his God, he went onward to the land of promise, to sojourn there as in a strange country. Crossing the river Jordan south of the Galilean sea, he pitched his tent at Sichem, a town of Samaria, in Palestine, and there he erected an altar to the Lord.

At this place God appeared to Abram again, informing him that this was the land his posterity should possess, though as yet he had no offspring. This might appear a strange declaration, but Abram "believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness."

He did not long continue at Sichem, but removed from place to place, maintaining the worship of the true God in the midst of the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan. At each place where he tarried, "he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord."

But Abram was called upon to undergo another trial. A famine arose in the land of Canaan, and obliged him to seek an asylum in Egypt. Here he gave way to a mistrust of the ever-watchful providence of God. He feared that he should be robbed of his wife, who was beautiful, and that himself would be slain; to avoid this danger, he adopted the very means to bring such an event about. He requested Sarai to say she was his sister; she was indeed his step-sister, so that it was a truth in terms, but it was a moral untruth, because he meant it to be understood that she was nothing more than a sister. This was sinful, and had not God been merciful and overlooked his fault,

he had certainly suffered for his conduct. But although he had brought himself into this strait, God, by his interposing power, preserved him and Sarai from harm. When Pharaoh, hearing of her beauty, caused Sarai to be brought to his palace, intending to make her his wife, God smote him and his servants with a plague. At this the Egyptian monarch called for his priests and magicians, to inquire the cause. They informed him, says Josephus, that it was for taking another man's wife, and that from a stranger, who had sought refuge in his dominions. Surprised and terrified, he called for Abram, and said, "What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now, therefore, behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way. And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had." This was noble and generous conduct. His intention was to marry Sarai, and, possessing absolute power, he might still have done so; but when he discovered she was the wife of another, he restored her to her husband, making him at the same time large presents.

After the famine had ceased, Abram again returned to Canaan, and, on the altar which he had built near Bethel and Hai, offered sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord for his return.

The patriarch, it appears, had generously given his relation, Lot, an opportunity of forming a household for himself, and each had increased greatly in flocks and herds. This at length became a source of discord between their servants; "there was a strife between the herdmen." The conduct of Abram on this occasion was most amiable. Forming a resolution of separating from Lot, he made this proposal:—"Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou

depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." This was truly disinterested conduct; his age, his authority, his power, and the obligations Lot was under to him, all favoured his claim to the choice, but he waved all, in order to preserve that harmony which had hitherto existed between them.

Very different was the conduct of Lot. No sooner was the generous offer made, than he looked around to see which was the most fertile and best watered country: "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar;" on these plains Lot fixed his choice. But though they were thus fertile, he had not made a happy choice: while Abram dwelt in the plains of Mamre, whither he had removed, enjoying the favour of God, who renewed his promise here, while he enjoyed also the friendship of powerful princes, there contracted, Lot was exposed to the horrors of war; confederate kings came up against those of Sodom and Gomorrah, and their allies, and defeating them in the vale of Siddim, they plundered the country, and took Lot and his household captives.

Unmindful of his nephew's ingratitude, Abram no sooner heard of his misfortunes than he hastened to his rescue; he armed his servants, and calling in the assistance of powerful friends, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, he hastened in pursuit of the conquerors, and coming up with them by night, he slew them, and rescued Lot and the captives, and recovered the spoil.

On his return he was met by Melchizedek, king of Salem, a person of high dignity and mysterious character; he brought the patriarch bread and wine for refreshment, and as a priest pronounced the benediction of God upon him; in return, Abram acknowledged in the priest the authority of God, and as a token of gratitude gave him tithes of all.

Abram was also met by the king of Sodom, who grate-

fully offered him the spoils he had recovered, but he refused the most trifling article. "I have lift up mine hand," said he, "unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

Soon after this, Abram was favoured with another vision, in which the Almighty said to him, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." To these gracious words, the patriarch responded in complaint that he had often received promises of a numerous progeny to inherit the land, but he saw no indication of their fulfilment, and both himself and Sarai were far advanced in years; he therefore exclaimed, "Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?"

The Almighty was not displeased at his complaint, but again assured him he should have a son, and that his seed should be as the stars of heaven. This was sufficient; Abram was silenced, his unbelief was subdued. To encourage him still further, God entered into a solemn covenant with him: "Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon." Having made this sacrifice early in the morning, Abram waited for the manifestation of the divine presence, guarding, at the same time, with pious care, the sacred victims, lest the birds of prey should devour them; thus he continued till the evening, when, at the decline of the sun, a supernatural sleep fell upon him, with "an horror of great darkness," and the Lord appeared to him, and revealed the history of his family for four hundred years; speaking of their oppressed condition in Egypt, and of their final settlement in the land of Canaan; at the same time assuring him that he should go to his fathers in peace, and die in a good old age.

But though the promise of an heir was thus repeated, and though it was ratified by solemn covenant, the performance was still to be delayed, the faith of Abram was yet longer to be subjected to trial: this he endured with patience, but not so did Sarai; abandoning all hopes of bearing a child herself, she was desirous of procuring one whom her husband might adopt, and to this end she requested him to take Hagar, her maid, as a second wife, a practice by no means uncommon in the early ages of the world.

Without taking counsel of God, the patriarch complied, and, as might be expected, it was the cause of much contention: Hagar became vain and impertinent, and Sarai peevish and resentful; her resentment was carried so far, that Hagar, who had been given up by Abram to her authority, could bear it no longer, and she fled from her presence into the wilderness. Here an angel appeared to the fugitive, commanding her to return and submit herself to her mistress, giving her at the same time a cheering promise that her child should be the father of many generations. Hagar obeyed the command, and in due time she bare a son, whom Abram named Ishmael, which signifies "God attends," or "hears." This was the name mentioned by the angel in the wilderness: "Thou shalt call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

This prediction has been fulfilled to the very letter. Ishmael was the founder of the Arabian nation, who sustain the character given them in this passage to the present day; for the Arabs have ever been a wild and unsettled people; roving about their vast deserts, opposed to, and at enmity with, all surrounding nations, yet never losing their native independence.

For thirteen years after the birth of Ishmael, nothing is recorded of Abram; it would appear that God had left him in displeasure, but he "keepeth not his anger for

ever." At the end of that time he appeared to him again, when he renewed and more distinctly explained the promise, and declared the performance at hand. To ratify it, the rite of circumcision was instituted,—a rite to which he submitted cheerfully. On this occasion the patriarch's name was changed from Abram to Abraham, and Sarai's to Sarah; a change greater in sense than in sound,—Abram meaning "the father of elevation," and Abraham "the father of a multitude;" Sarai "my princess," and Sarah "an exalted princess."

The promise is now distinctly set forth, that Sarah should bear a son, of whom the Messiah should come, or, as the word of holy writ expresses it, "in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed."

The next incident in Abraham's life gives us a very interesting picture of patriarchal manners. One summer's day, as he sat in the shade of his tent door, to enjoy the cool breeze, three strangers approached; immediately on perceiving them, the good man ran, notwithstanding his age, to meet them, and earnestly entreated them to take some refreshment. They readily accepted the invitation, and reposed themselves beneath the spreading branches of a tree, while Abraham busied himself in preparing a suitable repast: "he hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf, tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat."

All this time Abraham was ignorant of the rank of his guests, but he was soon made acquainted with their quality and errand. As they sat at table, the principal guest, addressing Abraham, asked for Sarah his wife, and on being told she was in the tent, he assumed his high character, and said, "I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo! Sarah thy wife

shall have a son." Abraham believed; his faith was strengthened by this assurance, but Sarah, who had listened behind the tent door, was detected laughing, either in contempt or distrust of the message; being charged with it, she denied, saying, "I laughed not;" but the charge being repeated, she was silent.

The prediction of the birth of Isaac was not, however, the sole object of these celestial visitants appearing unto Abraham; it was also to reveal the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. When, therefore, they had arisen from table, and were going towards those places, whither their host accompanied them, he who bore the chief rank, and who is styled in other places in Scripture "the angel of the Lord," tarried behind, and communicated his design to Abraham.

Full of pity for his fellow-men, and bearing on his heart his nephew Lot, with fearful anxiety he pleaded on behalf of those devoted cities; and the Almighty listened to his importunities, the words of which are remarkable for their affecting simplicity: "And Abraham said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for the lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake. And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be

angry, and I will speak: peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake." Here Abraham paused, awed perhaps by his own boldness in pleading thus earnestly and freely with the Almighty. "And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place."

Small as the number was on whose account the cities would have been spared, yet so many persons could not be found. Their guilt was universal, and their destruction certain; the only righteous there was Lot. Him God spared, not only for his righteousness' sake, but for the sake of his servant Abraham. "And it came to pass, that when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt."

After this awful event, Abraham withdrew from the country to the south-west of Canaan, between Kadesh and Shur, near the wilderness, taking up his residence in Gerar, a country of the Philistines. Here, as in Egypt, he betrayed a want of faith, in the fears which he entertained concerning his wife; and, in consequence of his prevarication, he was again in danger of losing her. Abimelech, the king of that country, fell in love with her, and, being informed that she was his sister, sent for her to his palace; but God preserved her. Abimelech discovering, through a vision, that she was the wife of Abraham, sent for him, and, reproaching him for the imposition, restored her with presents. From Gerar Abraham travelled southward, and dwelt at Beersheba, whither he was followed by Abimelech, and they entered

into a solemn covenant to live in mutual peace. Encouraged by this transaction, Abraham settled at this place; where he erected an altar to the Lord, and planted a grove, to which he might retire in sweet seclusion to worship God.

The oft-repeated promise was at length fulfilled: Sarah was delivered of a son, whom Abraham circumcised on the eighth day, calling him Isaac, as he had been commanded. Great must have been the joy of both the parents on this occasion; but the joy of Abraham was transporting and sublime in the highest degree. While Sarah dwelt upon the present enjoyment of a son which should be a comfort to her in her declining years, Abraham enjoyed the reward of faith, and, transported to future ages, saw not only an illustrious progeny descending from Isaac, but the time when

A virgin should conceive, a virgin bear a son, who should save his people from their sins,—the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the day Isaac was weaned Abraham made a great feast, thereby recognising him his heir. This excited the envy of Hagar, who had long cherished the fond idea that her son Ishmael should inherit Abraham's wealth. Ishmael had also been led to expect it; he therefore partook of his mother's feeling of discontent, and he was detected by Sarah in mocking Isaac. This aroused her parental feelings, and the evil passion of resentment; she demanded of Abraham to banish Hagar and Ishmael.

Abraham felt great concern at this demand: he felt that Ishmael was his son, and therefore it was his duty to afford him the protection of a parent. In great distress, therefore, as a pious man ought, he laid his domestic troubles before the Lord, seeking his counsel and direction; and the Almighty having designs of his own with regard to both Isaac and Ishmael, directed him to comply with Sarah's demand; and Hagar and her son were dismissed from the tents where they had so long dwelt in ease and plenty, with only a little bread and a bottle of water, to seek subsistence elsewhere. They wandered

into the wilderness of Beersheba; where they strayed about till their bread was eaten, and their water was spent in the bottle.

The exhaustion of a provision of water in a burning and inhospitable desert, without any prospect of a fresh supply, is a situation of such extreme misery, as fancy cannot depict. In such a situation were Hagar and Ishmael placed; in danger of perishing with thirst. Ishmael, although a young man, being less accustomed to the trials of a desert, began to fail sooner than Hagar, and needed her support; which she afforded him as long as her agonizing feelings would permit. "But when the usual symptoms came upon him; when his eyes became painfully inflamed, and his parched lips and tongue chapped and swollen; when his brain seemed to grow thick and inflamed, and he was deafened by the hollow sound in his ears, some bushes afforded him a shelter, under which he would fain lay down and die, and his affectionate mother withdrew, that she might not see his unrelieved death, and that she might lift up her voice and weep without restraint." In this hour of distress, when all hope had vanished, the God of Abraham sent his angel to comfort her, assuring her, that Ishmael should be the father of a great nation, and showing her at the same time a well of water, which saved them from impending death. Near this place they fixed their abode, and God prospered Ishmael, and Hagar took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

We have seen, that a covenant had been entered into between Abimelech, king of Gerar, and Abraham: but about this time, a serious quarrel had nearly arisen, in consequence of the servants of the former having taken away a well from the latter; a circumstance of great moment in a country where water forms one of the most valuable articles of life. Abimelech, however, revering the character of Abraham, conceded the point in dispute, and a covenant was entered into, by which Abraham's right to the possession of the well was ratified by oath,

and the place was called Beersheba, or "the well of the oath."

Abraham now appeared to be tranquilly settled; but his trials were not ended; his faith was now, indeed, called upon to undergo a severer trial than it had yet endured. The child of promise, Isaac, had arrived at the age of maturity, and was the delight and solace of his aged parents; and his dutiful and affectionate behaviour afforded them a sweet hope, that nothing would intervene to disturb their course till the time of their dissolution; but their expectations were vain. While Abraham looked upon his Isaac as the child of promise, and the father of nations, he received this astounding command:—"Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering, upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Painful and afflicting must have been the patriarch's emotions at this moment. He was to take his son, his "only son," his beloved child, on whom his heart was fixed, and go into a distant land, as though he was going on a pleasant excursion with his Isaac by his side, to offer him up as a burnt offering. But what was the conduct of the patriarch on this trying occasion? Doubtless he felt all the sympathies of human nature, but they were lost in the overwhelming sense of duty, which he owed to his God. Without even so much as a murmur, "he rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and went unto the place of which God had told him."

Some may suppose this was a hasty motion, impelled by over much zeal; but it was not so. Three days did it take Abraham to reach the destined spot, and for three days was the desire of his heart before his eyes, and still he persisted in the divine command, retaining his confidence in a covenant-keeping God.

At length they arrived at the place where the sacrifice

was to be made; and Abraham alighting with his son, left the servants below, while they ascended the mountain; Abraham bearing the fire and the knife, and Isaac the wood for the pile. As they went onward, Isaac put a question to his father, which could not fail to touch his parental affection: "And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together." And now the altar was erected, and the wood laid in order, and Isaac bound thereon, an unresisting victim. After a pause, "Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son." This was enough; the sacrifice was in effect performed; God, who had watched every part of the scene, now interposed. Calling to the patriarch from heaven, he commanded him, saying, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me."

With what transport did Abraham unbind his son; with what rapture embrace him! And now was the prophecy, which the patriarch had just before uttered, that God would provide himself a lamb, fulfilled:

On looking back from whence a rustling noise
 Proceeded, he beheld, entangled by
 His crinkled horns in the thick bush, a ram.
 Which way soe'er it sought to free itself,
 Whether it pushed in front or did recede,
 Still it became involved yet more and more
 In the thick-grown and tangling underwood.
 This Abraham saw, and reaching forth his hand
 Took it, an easy prey, and offered it
 In Isaac's stead, a sacrifice to God.

And it was a sacrifice, in which the heart of the worshipper accompanied the offering in fervent gratitude. To testify that gratitude, and to be a memorial of the Lord's goodness to him, Abraham gave the place a new

and significant name, "Jehovah-jireh," which means, "In the mount of difficulty the Lord will be seen." On this mount the Temple was afterwards built, and sacrifice offered to God continually. And now Abraham having received another assurance of the favour of God, by a voice from heaven renewing the former promise, returned home.

Shortly after this transaction, Sarah died, at the age of one hundred and twenty-seven years. Her loss was severely felt by Abraham, but, he sorrowed not as those reft of hope; he knew that this was not his resting place, for "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." He knew also, that he must soon die; and he, therefore, took occasion to provide a burying-place for the dead, in the country wherein he dwelt. The manner in which he procured it is exceedingly interesting. Calling the heads of the country together, Abraham stood up before them, and said, "I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight. And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince amongst us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead: none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead." This obliging answer led Abraham to request the cave of Machpelah, in a field belonging to Ephron, one of the principal men in the country; and no sooner were his wishes made known, than the owner exclaimed, with eager liberality, "Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee; and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead." Abraham, though grateful for his generous offer, would not, however, possess a burial place among strangers, without having a perpetual claim to it. He therefore insisted upon giving the owner the full value of the field, and he gave him four hundred shekels of silver. This is the first instance on record of purchase being made with

coin, for such it evidently was, and not common silver. The shekel contained, according to Josephus, four Athenian drachms, or about half an ounce; so that these shekels contained about fifty pounds of our money, a considerable sum in the days of Abraham.

With a tender care for his son Isaac, Abraham now deemed it expedient to procure for him a suitable wife; and lest he should form an indiscreet connexion with the families of Canaan, he commissioned his steward Eliezer to go into Mesopotamia, and seek a partner for him from among his own kindred: his faithful servant successfully fulfilled his commission, and returned with Rebekah, to whom Isaac was united. After this, Abraham himself married a wife, named Keturah, by whom he had six children, who became heads of prosperous tribes.

Reminded of his approaching end by his infirmities, the patriarch settled his worldly affairs, giving a portion to each of his other sons, but leaving the bulk of his property to Isaac, as heir of the promise. Having thus made provision for the welfare and peace of his family, he prepared for his last great change; which event soon after happened. He gave up the ghost, "an old man, and full of years." He died at the age of one hundred threescore and fifteen years. His remains were deposited, with great solemnity, by the side of Sarah, by his sons Isaac and Ishmael, who, though they had lived as strangers to each other, united in sympathetic sorrow, and mingled tears over the grave of their parent. Yet death, which had dissolved the tie between their parent and them, was the means of effecting between themselves a cordial reconciliation.

From an earthly, we are told, Abraham was removed to a heavenly Canaan, where he holds a distinguished place among its celestial inhabitants. Long after his decease, the Lord speaks of him as existing with himself and "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Our Saviour also, in one of his parables, speaks of him as possessing a portion of heavenly glory; Lazarus "was

carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." This implies, a state of felicity with Abraham, after a life of trial and of faith: nor can we desire any higher bliss for ourselves, than to sit down with him in the kingdom of heaven: for

There is a world above,
Where sorrow is unknown;
A long eternity of love,
Formed for the good alone;
And faith beholds the dying here,
Translated to that glorious sphere.—MONTGOMERY.

LOT.

And is there care in heaven? and is there love
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base
That may compassion of their evils move?
There is; else much more wretched were the case
Of man than beasts. But, oh! the exceeding grace
Of highest God, that loves his creatures so,
And all his works with mercy doth embrace,
That blessed angels he sends to and fro,
To serve to wicked man,—to serve his wicked foe.

How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
To come to succour us that succour want!
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant
Against foul fiends to aid us militant.
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
And all for love, and nothing for reward:
Oh! why should heavenly God, to man have such regard!
SPENSER.

BIRTH AND AGE UNKNOWN.

IN surveying the characters recorded in the Holy Scriptures, we should not only admire and imitate what is excellent in them, but mark their failings, in order that we may avoid them. This we shall have an opportunity of doing

in the character of Lot, whose failings are recorded as faithfully as are his virtues: so are the failings of all other Scripture characters,—one proof of the authenticity of the Holy Bible.

Lot, it appears, very early in life, had lost his father Haran, and was taken under the care of his uncle Abraham, before the call of that patriarch: we may imagine, therefore, that he was acquainted with the circumstances of that revelation. That he was a pious youth, is sufficiently attested by his leaving his native country, to share with his uncle the difficulties of a long and dangerous pilgrimage: he was the companion of Abraham in all his journeyings, and united with him in holy worship.

We have seen in the life of Abraham, that while Lot continued to be a fellow-traveller with his uncle, he increased greatly in flocks and herds; we have seen also the contention which arose between their servants, and what a different spirit Lot displayed, to the amiable spirit of his uncle. Lot chose the beautiful plains of Jordan, whither he bent his steps, and he pitched his tent towards Sodom. But though this country was suitable for his cattle, it was not so for the growth of piety and virtue; the inhabitants of Sodom were, as Scripture terms them, "wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." The Apostle Peter, however, bears testimony, that Lot maintained his integrity in that ungodly place: he "was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds:)" a sufficient punishment to him for his love of gain.

But Lot was not only punished by the wickedness of the Sodomites; his worldly prosperity suffered a reverse, in the wars between Chedorlaomer and his allies, and the king of Sodom and his allies. Sodom was taken and plundered, and Lot was deprived of his substance and taken captive, from which he was released by the activity and intrepid conduct of Abraham.

One would have supposed that Lot, after this, would have removed to some other country; but no; he was still attached to the fertile plains of Jordan, and hoping, probably, that the end would prove more prosperous, he returned to Sodom. The event proved otherwise; he was soon stripped of all, and obliged to flee for his life.

Sitting one evening at the gate of the city, two of those exalted personages, who had in the day-time been the guests of his uncle, advanced towards him, and Lot, on seeing them, ran to meet them, and invited them home with him. This they at first refused, expressing a determination to remain all night in the streets: but upon his urgent solicitations they complied and went with Lot, who entertained them with hospitality. The men of Sodom discovering that strangers were with Lot, beset the house, and demanded of him to deliver them up to them. This he refused, alleging, that the rights of hospitality were too sacred to be thus violated. Provoked with this reply, they made an assault upon him, upon which the angels revealed their character, and putting forth their hands, they pulled Lot into the house and shut the door; and when the men of Sodom attempted to force it, they smote them with blindness.

Having thus frustrated their mad attempts to do harm, the angels proceeded to unfold their errand to Lot. "Hast thou here any besides? son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it." Lot believed the words of the angels, and with eager haste ran to warn his sons-in-law of their danger, and to urge them to fly from the devoted city; but his admonitions were rejected; "he seemed as one that mocked," and they treated him as a visionary.

And now the morning arose, the last the inhabitants of Sodom were to greet. With its first beams, the angels awoke Lot, and urged his departure: but Lot still

lingered, as though he was unwilling to leave his relations and his substance behind; and if God had not been merciful, he had certainly perished in the "iniquity of the city." But while he lingered, the angels laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife and daughters, "and they brought him forth, and set him without the city." They then pressed him to escape for his life, and gave him a charge not to look behind, or stay in the plain; and lest he should be induced to stop within the limits of destruction, he was directed to flee to a distant mountain.

To this refuge he might have fled with safety, since God was his leader; but Lot, overwhelmed with fear and distress, and emboldened by the favour God had shown him, pleaded that he might flee to a little city near, and that it might be spared. This was granted, with an injunction to hasten thither, since vengeance must be delayed till his arrival there.

As they journeyed onward, her heart dwelling upon those she had left behind, in direct opposition to the command given, his wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. Not a statue of rock salt, as some suppose; the word rendered pillar, denotes any fixed object; and that rendered salt, denotes also bitumen. We may, therefore, imagine, that she was overwhelmed by the encroaching matter which flowed from the burning city, and which formed a mound over her, and fixed her where she stood.

At length Lot gained the city of refuge: "The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar." No sooner had he arrived, than the wrath of heaven descended in fire upon the cities of the plain; the whole country around, to a large extent, was entirely desolated, and not only rendered unfit for cultivation, but has ever since been a lake of offensive waters, known by the name of the Asphaltic Lake, or Dead Sea. Thus was Lot stripped of his possessions, and bereaved of his wife and part of his family, through a love of gain; a striking comment upon the apostle's words, that "they who would be rich, fall into a snare."

But Lot had still further trials to endure; he had saved Zoar by his intercession, and had taken up his abode there; but he was soon obliged to remove from thence, by reason of the wickedness therein. Fearing he was unsafe there, he fled to the mountains whither the angel had first directed him, and the last that we hear of him is, that he dwelt there in a cave.

Would that a veil could be drawn over his conduct there; but God has declared it in his word, and man must not extenuate the facts there recorded; it is his to take warning by the example. In this cave, a place suitable for the cultivation of virtue and piety, he, who had stood firm against the temptations of Sodom, and had there preserved the strictest chastity and sobriety; he, who was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked, was betrayed into crimes of the deepest dye by his daughters, those of drunkenness and incest.

The offspring of these guilty daughters of Lot, were called Moab and Ben-ammi; from whom descended the Moabites and Ammonites; tribes conspicuous for their enmity to Israel in after times, and on whom the curse of heaven seemed to rest, by the continual ravages of war, and at length by utter extinction from among men.

“Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” Lot might seem, in the retirement of a cave, more secure than in the city of Sodom; but he fell. Retirement, therefore, is no security against the allurements of vice; the power of God only can maintain our steadfastness. “We are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.”

MELCHISEDEC.

Th' irrevocable oath is sworn,
 My best beloved, my only born,
 Charged with the eternal priesthood see,
 And ranked, Melchisedec, with thee.—MERRICK.

BIRTH AND AGE UNKNOWN.

THE concise description given of the character of Melchisedec, and the mysterious manner in which he is spoken of, have given rise both to conjecture and disputation. Some imagine that he was Christ, but St. Paul's testimony concerning him, "he was made like unto the Son of God," shows that such an imagination is vain. The Jews declare that he was Shem, their ancestor; while the Arabians say that he was the grandson of Shem on the father's side, and the great grandson of Japheth on the mother's. One learned writer contends that he was Ham, while another maintains that he was a descendant of Japheth. All this is unsatisfactory; of his genealogy we must remain ignorant: God has concealed it, and it is vain for man to endeavour to snatch it from oblivion. It is his to receive the narration as it stands recorded in the Scriptures, avoiding genealogies and contentions, since they are alike "unprofitable and vain."

That narration is brief and simple: when Abraham returned from the victory he had obtained over Chedorlaomer, it is stated "Melchisedec king of Salem brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand."

It appears, then, that Melchisedec was one of the kings of Canaan, and the seat of his government was Salem.

It appears, also, that he was preserved from the idolatry and depravity of the Canaanites, a devout worshipper of the true God, and that to recommend the religion he professed, he himself presided at the altar as the priest of the Most High God.

It is evident that Melchisedec and Abraham knew each other, and were, as all persons of unfeigned godliness are, friends. But Melchisedec did not appear on this occasion simply as the friend of Abraham, but as a priest. The bread and wine which he brought, was not so much to refresh the weary; they were an oblation made to God, by which the patriarch was called upon to offer up his grateful adoration for the victory obtained. And while engaged in this delightful work, Melchisedec pronounced his priestly benediction in the name of the Most High; and Abraham confessed in him the minister by giving him "tithes of all."

This is all that the sacred history relates of this great personage. It reveals him suddenly to us in the full meridian of his glory, and as suddenly withdraws him from our view. But scripture introduces him to our notice in another and more glorious light. The Psalmist, in a remarkable prophecy concerning the kingdom and priesthood of the Redeemer, wherein the Almighty Father is represented as declaring with an oath, says, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec;" thus plainly declaring that he was a type of the Messiah. Saint Paul, also, in an express comment upon this passage, carries on the parallel to a greater length: "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all: first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is King of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually."

Thus we see that Melchisedec stands as a typical resem-

blance of our great High Priest, who is consecrated for evermore, not as the sons of Aaron, "after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life," at the right hand of his Father in heaven, where he liveth to make intercession for those that "come unto God by Him."

With boldness, therefore, at the throne,
 Let us make all our sorrows known,
 And ask the aid of heavenly power,
 To help us in the evil hour.

LOGAN.

ISAAC.

Whether we view him on the mountain's height,
 Stretched on the pile, exposed unto the knife,
 Or whether in retirement his delight,
 His was a peaceful and obedient life.
 He lived to God. What further can be penned
 In praise of man? For who doth spend his breath
 In His blest service lives unto the end
 Of being, and shall triumph over death.

BORN, A. M. 2109. DIED, 2289.

It is not always the life full of stirring incidents that is the most important; the life of the man devoted to his God in blest seclusion very often affords more instruction than that which is busily spent in the busy world. Such a life Isaac led: he is neither renowned for exploits performed, or for any great event which happened to him. Inheriting from his father Abraham a large estate, and having received a pious education, he sat down in the quiet possession of it without seeking to enlarge his store.

The birth of Isaac had long been the subject of promise and prophecy, and had long been earnestly desired by his parents; yet it was delayed till they were advanced in years, that their faith might be exercised, and that he

might more evidently appear the gift of God. It is no wonder, therefore, that when he *was* born that the hearts of the parents were made glad. This they testified by giving him the name of Isaac, which signifies "laughter, or gladness."

Early in life he appears to have been the object of the scorn of Ishmael, the son of Hagar, the Egyptian servant; he envied Isaac as the heir of Abraham, and "who is able to stand before envy?" The sacred historian relates that he "mocked Isaac;" and the apostle, in explanation of the matter, says, "he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit." This conduct, which might have been very offensive, led to the banishment of the offender; but he was not banished solely on account of his offensive conduct. The temporal possessions, as well as the spiritual promise, were entailed upon Isaac, and therefore it was to effect the purposes of God that Ishmael was dismissed the tents of the patriarch.

After this, we read no more of Isaac till he had arrived at a state of manhood. There is no doubt that his youth had been dedicated to God, and now he was required to give a proof of his sincerity, by submitting to be offered up as a sacrifice by his father on Mount Moriah. Unacquainted with the mandate of heaven, that he must die upon the altar, Isaac went as the companion of his father to join in the sacred rites of worship, taking everything with them necessary for the oblation, save the animal. When they had nearly arrived at the spot where the sacrifice was to be made, he began to wonder where the victim was to be obtained, and ventured to ask his father. Abraham answered that God would provide one, still concealing the strange design till they had arrived at the appointed place, where it could no longer be kept a secret.

What his emotions were on learning the will of God is not easily conceived; but what was his conduct? All submission to the tremendous injunction, he declined it not, he complained not of it. He was bound upon the altar, without resistance, exposed to the fatal weapon

which was lifted up on high to destroy him. "A beautiful representation of the Redeemer of the world, who bare his own cross to Mount Calvary, and died for the sins of the whole world without a murmur." Isaac was, however, suddenly and unexpectedly rescued by a voice from heaven, and lived a pious and retired life with his parents, remarkable for the sweetness of his temper and the sincerity of his religion. By his gentle hand the dying pillow of his mother was softened, and he mourned over her remains with the deepest affection. He was then about forty years of age.

When the days of mourning were ended, Abraham deemed it expedient to seek a companion for his son, and Isaac cheerfully acquiesced in the prudent and religious desire of his father to procure one from among his own family, and not from among his idolatrous neighbours. Abraham, therefore, sent the steward of his house into Mesopotamia, to the city of Haran, to seek for a wife from among the offspring of Nahor, his brother. The steward accordingly went, and, on arriving at the place, he stopped at a well, to refresh his camels. Here he offered up a prayer to Abraham's God that his mission might be successful; his prayer was heard, and before he had done speaking was answered. A damsel came to the well, bearing a pitcher upon her shoulder, to draw water, a duty which devolves upon the females of the East without distinction of rank. After she had filled her vessel, Eliezer requested to take a draught; which, with true politeness, she permitted, and not only granted his request, but drew water also for the camels. Charmed with the behaviour of the damsel, Eliezer wished in his heart that she might prove one of his master's family; and, after making her presents for her kindness, he requested to know who were her parents; and when he was told that she was indeed of the family of Nahor, he "bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord," and he said, "Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not

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left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth; I being in the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren." On hearing these words the damsel ran to inform her family that a messenger from Abraham was at the well, and her brother Laban hastened out to him, and invited him to his house, with this pious welcome,—“Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.” Eliezer accepted the invitation, and after due care had been taken of the camels, refreshment was offered to him; but, eager to execute his master's mission, he refused to eat till he had told his errand. His overtures were accepted by the family, and Rebekah, also, on being consulted, expressed her willingness to go with Eliezer; and having thus succeeded, he was impatient to return with the agreeable tidings. He therefore resisted all the importunities of Rebekah's family to make a short stay with them, and he returned with Rebekah, who was dismissed with the blessing of her relatives.

This affair may excite some surprise in European readers; but it is perfectly analogous to customs still existing in the East, with only some trifling difference in different nations. “Thus, in Persia, when a young man becomes marriageable, his parents send a confidential servant from house to house, to find a suitable object. When one is found, he proceeds to the house of the father, and makes overtures, which, if accepted, he denotes his approval by offering sweetmeats to be brought. A few days after another meeting takes place, when the dowry she is to receive from the parents of the young man is settled, and then they are united.”

Leaving Rebekah and Eliezer on their journey, we return to Isaac. The sacred historian tells us “he went out into the field to meditate at eventide;” this was, doubtless, his usual occupation. He loved to leave the crowded tents of his father, to hold converse with his God in pious contemplation, and

Thrice blest is he who by some shady grove,
Far from the clamorous world doth live his own
Though solitary, who is not alone,
But doth converse with that eternal love.—DRUMMOND.

If this pious example of Isaac's was more imitated, how would virtue and piety grow among the human race: rural retirement at eventide is well calculated to improve the mind and the heart, and to elevate our affections to Him whose "tender mercies are over all his works."

Thus was Isaac employed, when on lifting up his eyes he saw the camels approaching which his father had sent into Mesopotamia, and he hastened to meet them. At his approach Rebekah alighted from her camel, and modestly took a veil and covered herself. And "Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

His comfort, however, like all other earthly comfort, was not without alloy; he had been encouraged to expect a numerous issue, but twenty years had elapsed and there was no child. This must have been a source of doubts and fears; had he been cut off without any offspring, the promise would have failed and the covenant been broken. Isaac, therefore, entreated the Lord for his wife, and the Lord was entreated of him; Rebekah, in answer to his prayer, bare twins, the elder of whom they named Esau, and the younger Jacob: the first signifying red, and the other the supplanter.

These were a source of trouble to their parents, occasioned by their own weak conduct. Isaac loved Esau "because he did eat of his venison," a circumstance one would have imagined which would never have operated upon such a pious man; and Rebekah loved Jacob, probably because of his peaceful disposition. This undue partiality led, as it always does, to domestic inquietude, and laid the foundation of continual strife between the brothers; and while yet very young, an incident occurred which proved its ill effects upon their minds.

Esau, who was fond of the chase, returning one day from his favourite pastime very fatigued, requested Jacob, who was preparing a mess of pottage for himself, to give him some of it. This Jacob, regardless of the sacred ties of brotherhood, refused, except on one condition, which was that he should transfer to him the right of primogeniture. To this Esau, worn out with hunger, acceded; he ate, revived, and went his way, but with his affections more than ever estranged from his brother. Many might imagine that Jacob alone was to blame in this affair; he was to blame, and so was Esau. Saint Paul, writing on this subject, says, "Esau despised his birth-right;" that he was "a profane person, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right:" evidently implying that it ought to have been dearer to him than life, and that in the renunciation there was a degree of apostasy.

Besides these domestic troubles, Isaac, though under the peculiar care of heaven, had others to endure. A famine, which not unfrequently happened in Canaan, obliged him to seek bread in a distant country. His first intention was to go into Egypt; but receiving a warning from God not to enter into that country, he took up his abode at Gerar, the capital of Philistia. Here he fell into the same error which Abraham had committed at the same place, in saying that his wife was his sister; for which he was severely reprov'd by Abimelech, the king, who at the same time threatened that whoever touch'd him or his wife should die. But though Isaac had thus transgressed, yet the favour of God was not withdrawn from him. During his residence in Philistia, he waxed so great in flocks and herds that the Philistines envied him; and in order to drive him from their country, they endeavoured to render his situation as uncomfortable as possible by stopping up his wells of water. Abimelech, perceiving their animosity, and probably jealous himself of his growing greatness, requested him to quit the country; which he accordingly did; and

he settled in the valley, where he sought again for the wells of his father.

But Isaac was not safe here. The men of Gerar followed him and took from him two of the wells which he had opened; and he then removed further, and opened the third, for which they strove not. Soon after this he dwelt at Beersheba, where he received the promise of God that his presence and his blessing should be with him. Here he erected an altar, and called upon the name of the Lord. It was while at this place, Abimelech, attended by his officers, paid him a visit; not knowing their design, he asked them why they came to him, seeing they hated him, and had sent him away from them? Their reply was very gratifying. They had remarked, they told him, that he was a favourite of heaven; and, therefore, they had come out of esteem to him, and to enter into a league with him, to which he consented; and after he had entertained them hospitably, the league was entered into, and they departed in peace.

After this event, nothing remarkable is recorded of Isaac for eighteen years: nothing appears to have disturbed the peaceful tenour of his life. But at the end of that period his peace was again disturbed, and that by his favourite son. To the grief of Isaac and Rebekah, he took two wives from among the idolatrous Canaanites. But though this circumstance caused him much distress, Isaac, with blind partiality, not only continued attached to Esau, but, in opposition to the Divine will, desired to give him the precedence, and to leave with him the blessing of the covenant, which he himself had received from Abraham. To this end, Isaac, who had it appears been long afflicted with total blindness, finding himself bowed down with age, and expecting soon to end his pilgrimage on earth, called for Esau, and commanded him to procure for him some of his favourite venison, and dress it that he might eat; promising afterwards to give him his blessing. This Rebekah heard, and full of love to Jacob, she resolved to counteract the design by causing him to

personate Esau. She, therefore, dressed Isaac's favourite meat, put the skins of the kid's upon Jacob's hands, and clothed him with the garments of Esau; in which disguise Jacob presented the meat to his father, and so effectually imposed upon him, that after he had partaken of the meat he kissed him, and, in the spirit of prophecy, pronounced a solemn blessing upon him.

Jacob had no sooner quitted the chamber than Esau returned, and the deception was discovered, at which Isaac was sorely grieved; it is said, he "trembled very exceedingly;" but he could not revoke the blessing. He saw, indeed, that it was the appointment of heaven, and he therefore confirmed it by these emphatic words: "Yea and he shall be blessed." At this Esau cried out in bitterness of soul, "Bless me, even me also, O my father! Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?" Anxious to bestow all that he could upon him, Isaac replied, "Behold thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth and of the dew of heaven from above; and by thy sword shalt thou live and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass, when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck."

By this fraudulent transaction, the breach between Esau and Jacob was made wider. Esau, indeed, harboured revenge in his breast against Jacob, and determined on the death of his father to put him to death. Of this Rebekah was informed, and she, therefore, persuaded Isaac to send Jacob to her brother Laban, hoping that his absence and time would allay the fury of his brother Esau. Accordingly, Jacob was sent away, with a charge not to take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, but one from among his brother's kindred. At the same time Isaac confirmed the benediction he had before given him.

After this, Esau plunged yet deeper into immorality, by taking one of the daughters of Ishmael to wife. Thus was Isaac punished by the apostasy of Esau, and Rebekah by the banishment of Jacob, for their undue partiality to their respective favourites; but all this was overruled by

the good providence of God to effect his own purposes. It was his will that Jacob should be "the heir of promise;" and He therefore made the weakness of Isaac and ambition of Rebekah subservient to that will. The Lord was, however, still merciful to Isaac. He suffered him not to go down to the grave till he had embraced Jacob again, and had heard that he and Esau were reconciled. This was forty years after their separation; soon after this, Isaac died at the age of one hundred and eighty years, and Esau and Jacob united in paying him the last solemn rites.

Isaac lived in sweet communion with God. His fervent piety secured him the favour of heaven and the peaceable enjoyment of the land of promise, the earthly Canaan; and now he has taken possession of the heavenly Canaan, whither all the chosen seed must eventually come. Be it our concern to imitate his example, that we may be of that happy number;

That we like him may enter in
That never ending rest from sin.

JACOB.

Of life's past woes the fading trace
 Hath given that aged patriarch's face
 Expression holy, deep, resigned,
 The calm sublimity of mind.
 He seemed a being who hath known
 Communion with his God alone ;
 On earth by nought but pity's tie
 Detained a moment from on high.
 One to sublimer worlds allied,—
 One from all passions purified,
 E'en now half mingled with the sky,
 And all prepared, oh ! not to die,
 But like the prophet to aspire
 In heaven's triumphal car of fire.

HEMANS.

 BORN, A. M. 2168. DIED, 2315.

God, who worketh all things according to his good pleasure, was pleased, in the early ages of the world, to deposit the sacred treasury of his truth with one family ; and to distinguish three of that family above all the rest by enrolling their names with his own: "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." Abraham was renowned for his faith, and Isaac for his retiring piety ; Jacob is presented to us with different qualities. Many are the striking incidents his life exhibits ; he was a man of real eminence, of sterling piety, and honoured by his God. In a peculiar sense, he was the root of the Jewish nation, and the illustrious progenitor of the Messiah, whom he prefigured. From him the children of God are named in every nation, and every generation, "The seed of Jacob," "The Israel of God."

The early part of the life of Jacob is necessarily blended with the life of his father Isaac. There he was left, dismissed from his father's house, on account of the enmity of his brother Esau. We now behold him a lonely benighted

wanderer, travelling on foot in a pathless desert toward Haran. Fatigued and afraid to proceed, he at length lay himself down under an almond tree, with the blue sky for his canopy, the cold earth for his bed, and a stone for his pillow. Here he fell asleep; in the slumbers of which he was favoured with a remarkable vision. A ladder was set upon the earth, whose top reached the skies. On this ladder the angels of God ascended and descended, and above it appeared the visible presence of God. While surveying this wonderful scene, Jacob heard a voice from heaven, which assured him of heavenly protection, and confirmed to him the promises made to Abraham and Isaac. This dream made so deep an impression on his mind, that when he awoke he exclaimed in holy awe, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Then arising from his cold bed, he took the stone on which he had laid his head, and set it up upon the top of others as a monument of God's love toward him. He then called the place Bethel, which is, "the house of God;" and to render the consecration complete, he took oil and poured it thereon. Then offering up a fervent prayer, and making a solemn vow to God, he set forward with a joyful heart towards Mesopotamia, whither he safely came.

When he had arrived at a well near Haran, Jacob met with some shepherds tending their flocks, of whom he made inquiries concerning Laban, his uncle. They told him that they knew him, and that his daughter, Rachel, would shortly come to the well with her flocks, and soon after Rachel appeared; and Jacob rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered them for her. He then made himself known, saluting her with a kiss, and weeping for joy. On hearing that Jacob was her cousin, Rachel hastened to inform her father, Laban, who ran out to meet him, and to welcome him to his house; where Jacob related the circumstances which compelled him to seek an asylum under his roof, at the same time offering to abide there as a menial. This Laban acceded to; but

insisted on paying him wages, desiring him to name what he would require. Jacob, who, it appears, had placed his affections on Rachel, offered him his services for seven years, if he would give him her to wife; which Laban promised to do, and the years "seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

When the time had expired, Jacob demanded the fulfilment of the contract; but Laban fraudulently imposed Leah, his eldest daughter, upon him, instead of Rachel. On discovering the imposition, Jacob remonstrated with Laban, and was informed for the first time that it was contrary to the custom of the country to marry the younger before the elder. This was true; but Laban ought to have made that known at the time the contract was made; but he had more regard for his own interest than either for the law of rectitude, his nephew's welfare, or his children's peace. He knew the value of Jacob's services, and he therefore contrived this to retain him in his service, knowing that love would make large allowances to obtain its object; he therefore offered to give him Rachel also at the end of the week (which was the time in that country dedicated to the nuptial solemnities), if he would serve him another seven years. To this Jacob consented, and he served Laban for Rachel also, whom he loved more than Leah. This partiality was displeasing to God, and he showed his displeasure by causing Leah to be fruitful, while Rachel remained barren. Nor was he punished in this way only; his peace was disturbed; the fertility of Leah excited the jealousy of Rachel, and she so far forgot herself as to demand children of Jacob, "lest she should die." For this strange conduct, Jacob, though naturally of a mild disposition, severely reproved her: "Am I," said he, "in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?" Rachel, thus brought to a sense of her folly, had recourse to Sarah's stratagem to obtain children. She gave Bilhah, her handmaid, to Jacob, by whom she had two sons, Dan and Naphtali. Leah also, copying her example, gave him Zilpah, her handmaid, who bare Gad and Asher.

But though the objects desired were obtained, this was the source of much discord; where Jacob looked for peace and happiness, though in the bosom of his own family, there he found discord. So will it always be with those who consult not God in the affairs of this life! This Jacob had evidently neglected, and therefore he suffered through the feuds and jealousies of his wives.

Leah had borne six sons and one daughter to Jacob, while Rachelyet remained childless. At length Providence, which had designs of its own to accomplish, caused Rachel to be the joyful mother of a son, whom she named Joseph, saying, "God hath taken away my reproach: the Lord shall add to me another son."

It was about this time that the servitude of Jacob for Leah and Rachel expired; and he expressed a desire to return home; but Laban was not willing to part with him. His affairs had so prospered in the hands of Jacob, that, for interest's sake, he solicited him to remain. This he consented to, on condition of receiving that part of Laban's flocks which should be "ring-straked, speckled, and spotted," for his labour. These terms were agreed upon; and the flocks were separated; those mentioned in the contract were delivered to the care of the sons of Laban, and sent to a distance of three days' journey, leaving the white only in Jacob's care.

Laban no doubt thought that Jacob would have but few for his share; but in this he was mistaken. "Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chestnut tree, and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods." These he set in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, so that the flocks conceived and brought forth cattle ring-straked, speckled, and spotted. But Jacob did not adopt this plan with the feebler cattle, so that "the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's."

When Laban saw the effects of this stratagem, he envied Jacob, and his countenance betokened dissatisfaction. His sons also murmured at the success of Jacob,

and charged him with taking away their father's property, and building his glory upon their ruin. In this exigence, Jacob had recourse to prayer; and he received a command to return unto his father's house, and a promise that God would be with him. Hereupon he called Leah and Rachel, and related the injurious treatment he had received from their father, and the vision he had been favoured with. They declared themselves of the same opinion as regards the unkind treatment of their father, and expressed their willingness to go with him according to the Divine injunction. Accordingly, while Laban was gone to shear his sheep, Jacob took his wives, and children, and all that he had gotten in Haran, to go to Isaac, his father. Himself was very scrupulous not to take aught but his own; but Rachel took her father's teraphim, or household gods, unknown to him. His flight was so well managed, that three days had elapsed before Laban heard of it. On receiving the information, he set out with speed to overtake the fugitives, intending to bring Jacob back by force, or put him to death; but God, the night before, in a vision, warned Laban against doing him an injury. Accordingly, the next morning, overtaking Jacob in Mount Gilead, he dissembled his rage, and only chid him for the abruptness of his departure, and accused him of acting ungratefully. "And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters as captives taken with the sword? Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp? And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? Thou hast now done foolishly in so doing."

All this appears very plausible, and one would conclude that Jacob had acted improperly by his clandestine departure; but this was not the language of the heart; *that* was uttered immediately after. Laban said, that it was

in his power to hurt him at that moment ; but he added, " the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad." Thus plainly declaring that this command alone prevented him from doing so.

But Laban did not only charge him with acting ungratefully, but with theft. " Though thou wouldest needs be gone," says he, " wherefore hast thou stolen my gods ?" Jacob excused his sudden departure on the ground that he was afraid, if he had told him his intentions, he would have forcibly detained his daughters ; but as to the theft, he spurned the charge, bidding him search all the tents, and to slay those with whom it might be found. Accordingly, he searched the tents of Jacob and Leah, and the two handmaids, and not discovering them, he went to Rachel's. Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them ; when Laban, therefore, came to search her tent, she excused herself from rising by a plea of modesty, by which means she escaped detection.

After the search was ended, Jacob expostulated with Laban on his ungenerous and unnatural conduct, in a speech of great magnanimity ; at the conclusion of which Laban appears to have been convinced of his error, and Jacob's honesty. He therefore proposed to enter into a covenant with him ; to which Jacob readily consented, and they erected a pillar of stones for a memorial. Jacob then offered sacrifice upon the mount, and afterwards they all partook of a feast in peace and amity. The next morning Laban took an affectionate leave of his sons and daughters, and returned home, and Jacob went on his way to Canaan.

He had not travelled far before he was met by some angels ; on account of whose numbers he called the place Mahanaim, which signifies two hosts. These doubtless appeared to him to assure him of heavenly protection, of which he stood in great need, for he was now approaching the residence of his brother Esau, who had become the head of a numerous and powerful people. This must have

been a source of much anxiety to Jacob, for he had great reason to dread his fury. The injury he had done his brother was great, and heightened by many aggravating circumstances; and therefore he could not but fear that his brother would be revenged upon him.

In this perplexity he had recourse to an expedient as prudent as it was conciliatory. He sent messengers to Esau to announce his approach, and to give an account of himself and proceedings, couched in the most respectful language. To this he received no reply; instead of bringing an answer, the messenger told him Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men. This intelligence alarmed him; he concluded, that his brother Esau was coming with a hostile intent, and it caused him much distraction; for he knew that he was too feeble to oppose him, and that he could not fly from him. At length he came to the resolution of dividing his company into two bands, in hopes that if Esau should come to the one company and smite it, the other might escape.

This was human prudence, but Jacob's security was in heaven; thither he addressed his prayer, urging that promise upon the strength of which he had encountered so many trials. After he had prayed, he bethought himself of another expedient to soften Esau's resentment. Probably he might think his brother considered his first message a mere compliment; he therefore resolved to send him a handsome present of cattle. These he sent onward, ordering those who had the charge of them to say, when asked to whom they belonged, "They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and behold also he is behind us." Jacob then set the rest in order, reserving Rachel and Joseph in the rear, that they might have the better chance of escape.

The same night he, with his wives and children, passed over the ford Jabbok, which is a small river running into the Jordan. When they were passed over, Jacob remained behind, and was encountered by an angel in a human form, with whom he wrestled till the break of day.

Jacob was permitted to prevail; but that he might be sensible it was not by his own strength, the angel touched the hollow of his thigh, so that he halted. When the morning arose, the stranger requested to go; but Jacob, who seemed to have discovered that he was more than man, claimed his blessing ere he departed. In reply, the angel, after inquiring his name, changed it to that of Israel, which signifies a Prince with God, giving this reason for so doing: "For as a prince thou hast power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Jacob then inquired the angel's name, but he replied, "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?" And he blessed him and departed.

At his departure, Jacob, inspired by gratitude, called the place Peniel, which signifies the face of God, "For," said he, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." He then proceeded on his journey, and had not gone far when he saw his brother coming. As they approached each other, Jacob bowed himself seven times to the ground, and Esau, unable to resist the impression Jacob's meek submission made upon him, ran to meet him, and fell on his neck and kissed him. Revenge was turned into love, and Esau, who once thirsted for his brother's blood, now wept tears of joy at seeing his face again. The once divided brothers now met in fond embrace. "Oh! how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

'Tis like the oil bestowed
 On Aaron's sainted head,
 That down his beard in richness flowed,
 And o'er his garments spread.
 'Tis like the dews that drop
 In grateful showers o'er
 Fair Hermon's heaven-ascending top,
 And thence on Zion pour.

After the first transport of joy had subsided, Esau, with an unenvious eye, beheld Jacob's stores, which he told him "God had given him;" and he was with difficulty

prevailed upon to accept a present from that store. Esau then saluted the wives and the children of Jacob ; and, to show further marks of reconciliation, he offered either to accompany him, or leave him some of his men to guard and attend him. Jacob courteously refused his generous offers, upon which they parted on friendly terms, Esau returning to Mount Seir, where he resided, and Jacob journeying towards Canaan. Here, on his arrival, he built himself a house, and made booths for his cattle, calling the name of the place Succoth, which signifies booths.

After this, he removed to the city of Shechem, where he purchased a piece of ground, of Hamor, king of Shechem, for a hundred pieces of money. Here he spread his tents, and erected an altar for divine worship, dedicating it to the God of Israel, intending to make it his abode, for the remainder of his days.

But there is no certain rest for man on earth: when he fancies he has secured a permanent dwelling, too often unexpected evils arise, which put to flight his fondest hopes. This Jacob found ; he had now ample grounds in the Land of Promise, but a stroke of deep domestic affliction forced him again to lead a wandering life. Dinah, his only daughter, brought herself and her father to shame. Attracted by the gaieties of Shechem, she went thither at one of their festivals, " to see the daughters of the land," and Shechem, the son of Hamor, became enamoured of her, and carried her away. After this, repenting of the act, and loving Dinah sincerely, he requested his father to mediate with Jacob, and obtain her for his wife. This Hamor did ; but Dinah's brothers took up her cause, and would not consent unless the Shechemites agreed upon a general circumcision. They did so ; and the affair seemed likely to terminate honourably : but the whole was an artifice of Simeon and Levi, the sons of Jacob, who, at the head of a chosen band, on the third day after they were circumcised, when their wounds

prevented them from making any resistance, entered the city, and slew all the men with the edge of the sword, carried the women and children captives, and plundered the place.

After they had committed the atrocious deed, they returned with their sister to their father. The peaceful Jacob was struck with horror at their crime, and reproached them for their barbarity; he feared, also, that it might end in the ruin of his family, by stirring up all the inhabitants of the land against him. His fears were probably well-founded, but God was his guardian and his guide; He bade him remove to Bethel, and dwell there. Thither he accordingly removed, first purging his family from all idols, and from all superstition which might cleave to them from their intercourse with heathen tribes; their idols and their earrings he brake to pieces, and hid them privately under an oak, near Shechem. Having performed this duty, Jacob set forward for Bethel, the place where he fled from his brother Esau, where he tasted the goodness of God, and where he had received the promise which had been so eminently fulfilled.

On arriving at Bethel, he erected an altar; and God appeared to him again, renewing his covenant, and confirming his new name, Israel, to him. Jacob raised a pillar to commemorate this circumstance, and consecrated it by pouring oil thereon. Here Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died; and they buried her beneath an oak, calling it the oak of weeping, expressive of the sorrow they felt for the loss of a faithful domestic.

Prompted by filial love, Jacob made not a long stay at Bethel, but hastened to pay a visit to his aged father. On his way thither, he was called upon to resign his dearest earthly object, into the hands of Him who gave it; Rachel died, leaving an infant son, to whom, as she was expiring, she gave the name of Ben-oni, "the son of my sorrow," but which Jacob afterwards altered to Benjamin, "the son of my right hand."

Yes ; Rachel lies in Ephrath's land,
Beneath her lonely oak of weeping ;
With mouldering heart and withering hand,
The sleep of death for ever sleeping. KNOX.

After he had committed her beloved remains to the earth, and had erected a monument over her grave, Jacob continued his journey ; but before he reached Mamre, he experienced another wound, in the shameful conduct of Reuben, his son, and Bilhah, the handmaid of Rachel. Thus, in deep affliction, he journeyed onwards to his father's house, where he arrived after being absent forty years, and after experiencing many trials and deliverances, many troubles and blessings.

Great must have been the joy of the aged patriarch when he embraced his son ; nor could the joy of the son be less than that of his father. In *that*, he found relief from the sorrows he had felt at the loss of his Rachel, and at the evil conduct of his children.

No mention being made of Rebekah, it is probable she had fallen asleep : if not, her joy must have been complete, at beholding her favourite son in health, abounding in riches, and above all, friends with his brother.

Jacob had not long enjoyed his father's company, before a fresh misfortune befel him : Joseph, the son of the beloved Rachel, who was now about seventeen years of age, seeing the wickedness of his brethren, reported the life they were leading, to his father. "Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children," and in the fondness of his heart, he made him a coat of many colours ; not interwaved, but consisting of pieces tastefully sewed together, after the manner of some Indian dresses at the present day.

This was not judicious in Jacob ; for it was manifesting a superior regard for the youth, and failed not to excite the envy of his brethren : and this feeling was still further excited, by two dreams which Joseph had, and which he very innocently related to them. The first was, that him-

lf and brethren were binding sheaves in the field, and

the sheaves of his brothers made obeisance to his sheaf. The second, that he had seen the sun, and the moon, and the stars making obeisance to him. For this, Jacob chid him; probably to mitigate the resentment of his other sons toward Joseph. "Shall I," said he, "and thy mother, and thy brethren, indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" But though the fond father thus chid his son for relating his dreams, they left a deep impression upon his mind; he considered them, indeed, indicative of future events.

After this, the eldest sons of Jacob fed their flocks near Shechem, and Jacob being desirous of knowing how they fared, sent his beloved Joseph, to inquire after their welfare. No sooner did they see him coming, than their malice, which had been concealed, for want of opportunity, was aroused, and they came to a resolution of slaying him, and telling their father that an evil beast had devoured him. This they had done, but for one dissentient voice; Reuben alone could not think of imbruing his hands in the blood of his innocent brother: he therefore advised them to cast him into a pit near at hand; intending to rescue him privately. To this they agreed; they seized him and stripped him of his garment, and, regardless of his cries, let him down into the pit, exposing him to famine, and despair. They then sat down to regale themselves, and while thus engaged, a company of Ishmaelites coming by, Judah proposed that he should be sold to them: they did so; and Joseph was carried by them into Egypt, as a slave.

After he had departed, the merciless brothers consulted together, what account they should give of him to their father, and they came to the resolution, regardless of the feelings of their one common parent, of telling him that an evil beast had devoured him; thus cutting off all hope of ever seeing him again in this world. They told their tale, and to confirm their evil tidings, they exhibited Joseph's coat, dyed in blood, sporting with him, at the same time, by asking him whether he knew it? and telling him they had found it. Jacob knew it too well, and

believing their words, he cried out in agony of soul, "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces." This was the severest stroke Jacob had yet endured. The loss of his beloved Rachel affected him deeply; but her death was a debt due to nature, and time allayed the pang; but the supposed death of Joseph, by fierce wild beasts, so affected him, that he put on sackcloth, and resolved to mourn for him all the days of his life.

Hard, indeed, must have been the hearts of the sons of Jacob, to see him thus bowed down with sorrow, and not to give him one ray of hope of seeing his Joseph again, by confessing their cruel deed. But though these wicked men were following their own evil ways, and innocent Joseph was suffering in bondage, yet the whole counsel was of God, to effect great and wonderful things.

Little is recorded of Jacob during his separation from Joseph; doubtless, he went mourning, and, to add to his grief, Judah married a Canaanitish woman, and afterwards grievously sinned with his daughter-in-law, Tamar.

At length a famine arose, which was so grievous, as to threaten destruction to the neighbouring countries, and Jacob partook of the general calamity; and he and his household were reduced to the greatest straits: but there was corn in Egypt. This Jacob heard of; and he sent his ten sons down, to provide a supply for their sustenance. When they arrived, they were treated as spies; and the governor, to prove their honesty, required them to bring down Benjamin with them, detaining Simeon as a pledge of their return; to which Jacob was unwilling to consent. "Me," he cried, "me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." But although persuasion was ineffectual, when their stores were exhausted, after much struggling with nature, Jacob consented, and he sent them away with a present to the governor, fervently praying that God would be with them, and send away their other brother and Benjamin; adding,

with pious resignation to the will of God, "If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

Many a wishful hour did Jacob pass in Canaan, while his sons were in Egypt. Oft did he pray for them, and oft turn his eyes towards the track they had taken, hoping to see them return with Simeon and Benjamin. As for Joseph, although his memory was fondly cherished, Jacob entertained not the remotest idea of ever seeing him again. But the ways of God are not as the ways of man, and so good old Israel experienced. The sons of Jacob returned, and Simeon and Benjamin were of the number. This was a grateful sight; but Jacob had more grateful news to hear. The governor of Egypt was Joseph! When the patriarch first heard it, his feelings were overpowered, and he knew not how to credit it; his "heart fainted, for he believed them not." But when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him and his family down into Egypt, his spirit revived, and he exclaimed, "It is enough: Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." Accordingly, Jacob gathered all his wealth together, and regardless of his age, and the difficulties of the journey, he hastened into Egypt, to see his long-lost child. When he had arrived at Beersheba, he halted, to worship God, who appeared to him, permitting him to continue his journey, and promising him that he would be with him; that he would there make a great nation of him; that he would surely bring him back again, and that Joseph should there close his eyes. Thus encouraged, Jacob continued his journey towards Egypt, where, on arriving, he received instructions to go to Goshen, which was the most fertile part of Egypt. Here Joseph met him, and fell on his neck, and weeping the mutual tear of joy, the patriarch exclaimed, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive."

Soon after his arrival, Joseph introduced his father to the king of Egypt, and the patriarch blessed him, and supplicated God on his behalf. Struck with his sage appearance, the monarch inquired his age, to which he replied,

"The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years : few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." This must not be considered the language of discontent, but of experience; the patriarch had endured much trouble, and it had taught him the vanity of all below.

Jacob lived seventeen years in Egypt, enjoying the society of his beloved child; at the end of which time, perceiving his dissolution near, he sent for Joseph, and bound him by a solemn oath, to bury him with his fathers. Joseph then returned home, but he was soon recalled, to witness his father's death. He hastened to his bedside, taking with him Manasseh and Ephraim, his two sons. On seeing Joseph, the dying patriarch exerted his remaining strength, and sat up in the bed, to bequeath him his prophetic blessing. He then blessed the children of Joseph; but as he placed his hands on their heads, he crossed them, placing the right on the younger, and the left on the elder. This Joseph, supposing it was a mistake, sought to correct; but Jacob, acting by Divine direction, persisted in it, and he gave to each a portion in Israel; declaring that the younger should be greater than the elder.

Hitherto, the conversation had been only between Jacob and Joseph: but finding his end very near, he called all his sons together, that he might take his farewell of them, distribute his blessings among them, and foretell what should befall them in after times.

Of all the predictions Jacob uttered, *that* concerning Judah is the most remarkable, and the most interesting: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." The promise of the Messiah had hitherto been confined to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but now the dying patriarch foretells the *time* in which, and the period *at* which, the great Restorer of the world should appear. The sovereign authority was to continue in Judah's possession, till Shiloh made his appearance, and then it must for ever

cease. Thus has it happened; the tribe of Judah possessed that power till Christ appeared, and since *then*, they have had not dominion or priesthood. A glorious and incontestable proof of the Christian religion—that Jesus is the Christ that should come into the world.

In firm dependence upon this Redeemer, and in earnest desire for the completion of his grace, in the midst of his addresses to his children, Israel exclaimed, “I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.” And when his addresses were concluded, “he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.” Joseph having closed his eyes, weeping over him, commanded the physicians to embalm the body; and after a mourning of seventy days, by the king’s permission, attended by all the state officers and principal nobility of Egypt, he carried his remains into Canaan, and buried him in the cave of Machpelah, as he had charged him.

Thus, at the age of one hundred and forty-seven years, Jacob closed his chequered and afflicted life, in faith, in peace, and joy. His memory stands in the records of truth an instructive example to all generations.

In what was excellent may we partake;
And what was evil, that may we forsake.

JOSEPH.

He grew, by truth and faithfulness,
In favour near the throne;
And gave his brethren in distress
A Goshen for their own.

BARTON.

BORN, A. M. 2260. DIED, 2369.

It has been well said, that “the proofs of an overruling Providence are not less numerous, or less obvious, than those which demonstrate the Divine existence.” It is true,

we may not be able to give a consistent account of either past or present events, because God "takes his way in the sea, and his path in the mighty waters;" but if we attentively survey our own lives, or the history of others, we must be constrained to exclaim with the Psalmist, "Verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth;" and with the poet:

The hand that forms us in the womb,
Guides from the cradle to the tomb.—COTTON.

The history of Joseph is a strong confirmation of this great and glorious truth. The early part of it was indeed dark and gloomy, but we shall see in the end that God doth oftimes hide a smiling face behind the dark dispensations of providence.

That part of his history which is noticed in the life of his father leaves him in the lowest state of human degradation—a slave to Ishmaelites, travelling into Egypt. These, when they arrived in that country, transferred him as they would a beast to another master. He was sold to Potiphar, a man of rank, and a captain of Pharaoh's royal guard.

In this new situation, painful as it must have been to the feelings of Joseph, he conducted himself in an exemplary manner, serving his God faithfully, and discharging his duties to his master. This his master saw, and finding his property safe under his management, he prudently made Joseph his steward, and "the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake."

Thus exalted, Joseph might expect to lead a comfortable life, though a slave; and might hope for eventual liberty as the reward of his services. But the virtue of Joseph must be tested by severe trials before he could sit down in established peace and tranquillity. Nature had been very bountiful to Joseph in bestowing upon him an elegant form. So beautiful was he, that his charms attracted the notice of his mistress, who, from first admiring, became attached to him; and giving way to her passion, solicited a return of it from him with much

importunity. But the virtuous youth replied, "Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand: there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

This was a noble resistance; but it served not to damp the ardour of the Egyptian's importunities. Reiterated attempts were made upon his virtue, and all the attractive allurements she could devise were exercised to gain his affections. But it was in vain; Joseph, stedfast in the fear of God, resisted them all.

So violently did this guilty woman beset him, that one day, when Potiphar was on duty, and the rest of the servants were from home, she threw off all decorum, and Joseph was obliged to flee from her, leaving his garment, which she had seized in the assault, in her hands. Despairing now of gaining his affections, her love was changed into revenge, and she determined to effect his ruin. She charged him with an attempt to commit that sin he had so nobly and so virtuously resisted, producing his garment in support of her charge. Potiphar believed her tale; and Joseph, not being able to disprove the assertion, was obliged to lie under the vile imputation, and submit to imprisonment.

But, although his feet were bound by fetters, and he was laid in iron, the sacred historian tells us, "the Lord was with him." He had the inward comfort and satisfaction of knowing that his conduct was right in the sight of God; and faith assured him that He would vindicate his cause,—would "make" his "righteousness as clear as the light, and" his "just dealing as the noon day." This assurance was realised; his imprisonment was the cause of his future greatness. By his virtuous deportment, Joseph grew into favour with the keeper of the prison, who, being assured that God was with him, committed the government of the prison into his hands.

In this state Joseph continued for some years, hoping to be released from his confinement: and believing, according to the Divine intimation which he had received in Canaan, that he should yet be raised to an exalted station, but knowing not how it should be brought about.

At length, a circumstance arose which for a while gave him a near prospect of better days. The chief butler and baker of Pharaoh had, for some offences, been committed to the same prison where Joseph was; and he, having the care of them, became acquainted with them. One morning, finding them very melancholy, he demanded the cause of their uneasiness, and found that they had each dreamed a dream which they were desirous of having interpreted. Joseph told them that interpretation was of God, and desired to know their dreams; and on their relating each his vision, he interpreted them as prophetic of their approaching sentence. In three days the butler was to be restored to his office; and the baker, at the same time, was to suffer an ignominious death.

This appeared a favourable opportunity for Joseph to regain his liberty; and so the sufferer thought. He, therefore, solicited the kind offices of the butler when he should be restored. "Think on me," said he, "when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness I pray thee; and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon." This was a touching appeal, and no doubt the man promised to represent his case to Pharaoh. But ah! how deceitful is human friendship, and how wanting in gratitude is the human heart! The butler was restored to his office, and Joseph was left in prison unremembered.

But though the chief butler forgot Joseph, God remembered him, and, at the end of two years, effected, in a remarkable manner, his deliverance and his exaltation. Pharaoh was visited with two dreams, which caused him

much disquietude, and which all the wise men of Egypt were unable to explain. In this perplexity the butler called to mind his ingratitude to Joseph; and he, therefore, took this opportunity of recommending him to the king's notice, for the skill he had displayed in the interpretation of the prison dreams. And Joseph was sent for in haste from his dungeon, and, after changing his prison garments, was brought before the king. Anxious to know the meaning of his vision, he told Joseph he had had two dreams, which none of his own subjects could solve, and that he had heard he was skilful in the art of interpretation. The pious youth, with humility, replied that the solution belonged not to himself, but to God, who should give him "an answer of peace." Pharaoh then related his visions. In the one, he had seen seven good kine devoured by seven lean kine: in the other, seven good ears of corn consumed by seven others that were withered and blighted. These Joseph interpreted as in effect but one; and the interpretation *was*, that the good kine and the good ears, prefigured seven years of plenty; and the lean kine and the withered ears, seven succeeding years of famine.

Having thus interpreted the dreams, Joseph proceeded to advise the king to improve them to his advantage, by choosing some able minister, who should be invested with power over all Egypt to appoint officers in all the towns to gather in the fifth part of the product of the land, and to lay it up in public granaries; and that all should be at the king's disposal, and secured in the cities against the time of dearth. Pleased with the interpretation, and the counsel, which was at once so natural and so convincing, Pharaoh immediately resolved that the man who had, by the Divine inspiration, suggested the plan, should carry it into execution. And Joseph was invested with the highest dignity in the state, with unlimited power to transact all the affairs of government, "to bind his princes at his pleasure, and teach his senators wisdom." "See," said Pharaoh, "I have set thee over all the land of Egypt." Then aft

having bestowed on him the ensigns of royalty, and his own seal ring, the seal of which no man might reverse, he caused him to ride in the second chariot, ordering his heralds to shout before him, "Bow the knee, and see the father of the king." Pharaoh then changed his name to Zaphnath-paaneah, which signifies revealer of secrets; and gave him for wife Asenath, daughter of Potipherah, priest of On.

Thus was Joseph, through a series of weighty trials, which he bore with fortitude, advanced to wealth and honour. But he did not spend his days in inglorious ease; he still conducted himself as a faithful and diligent servant. During the seven plenteous years, he travelled through all the land of Egypt, establishing granaries, and laying up stores according to his own suggestions. In this fruitful season God blessed Joseph with two sons, to whom he affixed significant names, expressive of his gratitude for mercies received.

At length the period of scarcity arrived, and distress was felt not only in Egypt, but in all the neighbouring countries. From all parts they cried to Pharaoh for relief, and they were directed to go to Joseph, by whose provident care their lives were preserved.

In the second year of the famine, amongst those that came down into Egypt to buy corn, were Joseph's ten brethren. He observed them and recollected their persons, while to them, amidst so much grandeur, he remained unknown. Without any suspicion, therefore, they fell down before him, petitioning for bread; thus fulfilling those very dreams which had raised their indignation against him, and which they had sought to prevent, by selling him to the Ishmaelites. Assuming a stern manner, Joseph asked them whence they came, and what was their object in visiting Egypt. They replied, that they came from Canaan, and that their object was to buy food. This he affected to disbelieve, and charged them with evil designs, and with being spies; but they again asserted, that their only object was to buy corn, in proof of which,

they assured him, that they were all one man's sons, of whom there had been twelve, whereof the youngest was with their father, and the next to him was dead. Still affecting to suspect them, Joseph put them into prison for three days; and at the end of that time, they were again brought before Joseph, when he treated them in the same stern manner. So deeply did they feel this usage, that they concluded it was a judgment upon them for their cruelty to their brother: not knowing that Joseph understood their language, they vented reproaches upon one another for the deed, and acknowledged their guilt: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." At these words, the affections of Joseph were touched, and he turned aside and wept; but the design he had in view, which was to bring them to repentance, was not yet accomplished. He therefore resumed his authority, taking from them Simeon and binding him before their eyes, as a pledge of their return to Egypt with their younger brother, to prove that they were honest men. They were then dismissed with corn and provision for their journey, and their money secretly restored.

After some time they returned into Egypt, bringing their brother Benjamin with them; and on their arrival, they were directed to Joseph's house, who now received them with kindness, inquiring after their welfare and that of their father. Then looking upon Benjamin, his heart was overwhelmed with emotions of love and joy, "and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there."

Having given vent to his feelings, he appeared again before them with all the dignity of the ruler of Egypt, and yet to their astonishment they were invited to partake of an entertainment, at which he paid respect to all, but more particularly to Benjamin; "and they drunk, and were merry with him."

When the morning arose, they were sent away laden

with corn; but they had scarcely left the city when Joseph's steward overtook them, and charged them with stealing his master's silver cup. This, conscious of their innocence, they denied, soliciting a general search, and declaring, that if it should be found, that person that had it should die, and the rest become the governor's slaves. To their mutual distress, the cup was found in Benjamin's sack, and they returned overwhelmed with grief to the governor's house, before whom they fell down without speaking a word. Joseph, accosting them in a stern manner, asked them, "What deed is this that ye have done? Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?" And when Judah had confessed they had nothing to say in their own defence, that God had found out their iniquities, and that in consequence of their supposed deed, they were all his slaves, to prove their affection for their brother, and their regard for their father, he told them he could not act so unjustly, but that Benjamin alone should be his slave, and the rest should return home.

On hearing this determination, Judah, who had made himself responsible for Benjamin's safe return, without attempting to extenuate the crime, or resist the evidence which appeared against his brother, appealed to the heart of the judge, in a speech of touching and unparalleled eloquence. "Oh, my lord," said he, "let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ear, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one: and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, you

shall see my face no more. And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now, therefore, when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad for a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father."

This was enough: Joseph was satisfied they were sorry for their cruelty towards him; that they were kindly affectioned one towards another with brotherly love, and that they were tenderly solicitous for their aged father's happiness. He therefore commanded his attendants to withdraw, and bursting into tears, revealed himself. "I am Joseph," said he: "doth my father yet live?" And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence; and no wonder, when we consider the cruelty they had exercised towards him. Joseph observed this, and he endeavoured to soothe their minds, and to palliate their guilt. "And he said, I am Joseph your

brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life." Thus casting a veil over their faults, pouring consolation into their bosoms, and turning their attention to the wisdom and goodness of God. And then

He fell upon the neck
Of Benjamin his mother's son, and wept. GRAHAM.

Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them; after which, his brethren acquiring confidence, they freely conversed.

The first care of Joseph was to provide for his father's house, and to make them partakers of his prosperity. He therefore charged his brethren to return home, and bring Jacob his father into Egypt; desiring them to tell him of all his glory, and of all they had seen. Pharaoh, also, when he heard that Joseph's brethren were arrived, commanded him to send carriages to bring down his father and family into Egypt, saying, "regard not your stuff: for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours;" so highly was Joseph esteemed by this amiable monarch. This commission Joseph eagerly and gratefully accepted; and he sent a considerable train with his brethren, to whom he gave presents, showing his superior regard for Benjamin, by giving him a larger portion of raiment and money than the rest. To his father he sent "ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way." When every preparation was made, Joseph, knowing their quarrelsome dispositions, and fearing they might enter into some debate which was most in fault for the injuries done to him, dismissed them with this injunction, "See that ye fall not out by the way."

In a short time Jacob came down into Egypt, and Joseph, on hearing his approach, urged by filial affection, hastened to meet him, and with expressions of reverence, and love and joy, he bade him welcome. He then pre-

sented his father and his brethren to Pharaoh, who, on their acknowledging their calling, according to Joseph's direction, made them a grant of Goshen for their residence, where they might live separate from the Egyptians.

But while Joseph was thus affectionately mindful of his father's house, was he unmindful of the Egyptians? No! they were indeed reduced to the greatest extremity; their private supplies were exhausted, and they were compelled to purchase from the public stores; they first spent their money, they then sold their cattle, and afterwards their lands and their liberty; and for this line of conduct, Joseph has been accused of acting unjustly towards the Egyptians; but a little consideration will free him from the charge, and raise him in our estimation for wisdom and prudence. Before his administration, there had been rebellions; he therefore, not solely out of regard to the king, but for the welfare of the people, took this opportunity of binding them to allegiance. Nor was this the only object Joseph had in view; for by taking the lands, which were suffered to lie fallow, he compelled the Egyptians, as Pharaoh's vassals, to till those lands, and by so doing, averted the horrors of future famine. Besides, the possessions of the people were eventually restored to them, a fifth part only being reserved for Pharaoh.

In pursuing his history, we perceive in him to the end a dutiful son and an affectionate brother, as well as the wise statesman. For seventeen years he enjoyed the society of his beloved parent; but at the end of that time he was called upon to stand by his dying bed, and witness the aged saint's departure. Before he expired, with great solemnity he blessed the children of Joseph prophetically, (preferring the younger to the elder,) and afterwards he blessed all his children, dwelling with peculiar delight on the character and circumstances of his much-loved Joseph.

A fruitful stem is Joseph,
A fruitful stem by a fountain;
Whose branches shoot over the wall.
Though the archers sorely grieved him,

G

Contended with him, and harassed him,
 Yet his bow retained its force,
 And strong were his arms and his hands;
 Through the power of the Mighty One of Jacob,
 Through the name of the Shepherd,—the Rock of Israel,
 Through the God of thy father, who helped thee,
 Through the Almighty, who blessed thee.
 May the blessings of the heavens from above,
 The blessings of the low-lying deep,
 The blessings of the breast and of the womb,
 The blessings of thy father and thy mother,
 With the blessings of the eternal mountains,
 The desirable things of the everlasting hills,
 Abound and rest on the head of Joseph,—
 On the crown of the chief among his brethren.

BOOTHROYD'S Version.

When the patriarch's strength was exhausted, and life
 became extinct, Joseph, overwhelmed with grief, fell upon
 the lifeless form, weeping, and kissing it, as an object
 precious even in death. But Joseph did not sorrow as
 one without hope. He knew that his father Jacob was
 gone to a better world, and that he himself should
 shortly follow, there to be reunited for ever. He knew
 that

Beyond the flight of time,
 Beyond the reign of death,
 There surely is some blessed clime,
 Where life is not a breath,
 Nor life's affections transient fire,
 Whose sparks fly upward and expire.

MONTGOMERY.

But Joseph's filial regard did not rest here; he had re-
 ceived a charge to remove the body of his father to Canaan,
 to be interred in Abraham's sepulchre. For this purpose
 he caused it to be embalmed, and, soliciting leave of
 absence, went up with the precious remains to Canaan,
 with all the retinue suited to his rank as "Lord of Egypt."

When he returned from the performance of this solemn
 duty, Joseph found an additional cause of sorrow in a
 message he received from his brethren. They imagined
 that now their father was dead, Joseph would be revenged
 on them for their fault, and they therefore sent a mes-

senger to him, supplicating pardon in the name of the God of their father. Grieved that they could entertain so base an idea of him, Joseph wept; and when they came to him, falling down with lowest prostration, crying to him for mercy, he raised them up, and assured them of his love; referring them to God, who alone, as the Judge of the world, had a right to take cognizance of their actions. "Fear not;" said he, "for am I in the place of God?" He also endeavoured to relieve their consciences of guilt which so heavily pressed upon them, by extenuating the wrongs he had sustained, and by telling them that God had overruled their treatment for wise purposes, which called aloud for their gratitude: "As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now, therefore, fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them."

After this Joseph lived fifty-four years; but the sequel of his history is told by the sacred historian in a few words. He had lived to see Egypt prosperous, and his own and his father's house multiply. At length the period arrived when he must part with his earthly honours for those that never fade; he died in peace at the age of one hundred and ten years, wept and mourned for by the prince and the people of Egypt.

On his dying bed, like his forefathers, he was gifted with the spirit of prophecy, and he left a charge with the Israelites, that when they departed from Egypt they should take with them his ashes, and mingle them with his fathers. Accordingly we read that in all the journeyings of the Israelites through the wilderness his remains were considered as a sacred deposit; and as a pledge that the covenant of God should stand fast with them. Saint Paul, commenting upon this passage, says, "By faith, Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones."

Thus the death, as well as the life of this eminent patriarch and servant of God, was truly excellent, and is a source of encouragement to all to persevere in the service of God.

Happy, oh! happy he, who not affecting
 The endless toils attending worldly cares,
 With mind reposed, all discontent rejecting,
 In silent pace his way to heaven prepares,
 Deeming his life a scene, the world a stage,
 Whereon man acts his weary pilgrimage.—ANON.

J O B.

A crown of glory graced my brow,
 Whole nations bent before me,
 Princes and hoary sires would bow
 To flatter and adore me.
 To me the widow turned for aid,
 And ne'er in vain addressed me,
 For me the grateful orphan prayed,—
 The sons of misery blessed me.

I raised the drooping wretch that pined,
 In lowly anguish lying,
 Was balm unto the wounded mind,
 And solace to the dying;
 Till one stern stroke of all my state,
 Of all my bliss, bereft me,
 And I was worse than desolate,
 For God himself had left me.

DALR.

Supposed to have died about A.M. 2512.

SOLON, one of the seven wise men of Greece, when requested by a wealthy and powerful monarch to pronounce him the most happy man on earth, instead of flattering his vanity, warned him to consider, in the midst of so much greatness, "what the end might be." This was wise counsel; and so Cræsus found, (though he despised it at the time,) when he was stripped of his dominions,

and led in chains to the stake. Thus wisely the inspired writers admonish us not to boast of to-morrow, not to trust in uncertain riches, since they oftentimes make themselves wings and flee away.

History is replete with instances of the mutability of fortune, and the sacred records abound with striking examples; but of all that can be produced, whether ancient or modern, whether sacred or profane, none is more striking than the history of Job, who, in one day, was plunged from the summit of human greatness to the lowest abyss of human degradation.

Who the writer of the history of Job was is unknown; some suppose Job himself, some Moses, and others Elihu. In the original, from the third to the forty-second chapter, it is written in poetry, the rules of which are difficult to be understood. The style is sublime, and the figures bold and striking. Some parts are allegorical, and there is much poetical ornament, but a portion of the work contains a simple narration of important facts. Some, indeed, pretend that the whole is a dramatic fiction, and that no such person ever existed; but God mentions him by his prophet Ezekiel, as a righteous man, with Noah and Daniel, and by the Apostle James, as an example of patience; and we may, therefore, conclude that the work is genuine, and the subject of it an eminent servant of the Most High.

Concerning the time in which Job lived, the opinions of the learned also differ. Some of the ancient fathers maintain that he was Jobah, one of the kings of Edom, and third in descent from Esau; others say, that he was a descendant of Nahor, by Huz, his eldest son, as Elihu was by Buz, his second. One modern writer thinks that he was contemporary with Abraham; another affirms that he lived in the time of Ezekiel. This latter opinion his book contradicts; for while it mentions the Deluge, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, it is silent on the subject of the Israelites passing through the Red Sea. It

is more than probable that his afflictions were previous, and his latter prosperity posterior to this event.

With dispute, however, we have nothing to do; if we would profit by the narrative, we must receive it, as stated by the sacred historian; that "he was a man in the land of Uz,—perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil." That is, he was a perfect and an upright man, inasmuch as his religion was sincere, and his conduct in unison with his principles.

Job is also introduced to us as a prosperous man; he had seven sons and three daughters, who were settled near, living in prosperity, in peace and in love. He had flocks and herds, and men-servants, and maid-servants, surpassing "all the men of the East." He was possessed of great power, and was revered by the young and the old, by nobles, and by princes. He was also renowned for his piety and integrity, and for his worship of the one true God.

Nor was it sufficient for Job to be pious himself; he took care to teach his children "in the way that they should go;" and so anxious was he that they should be "right in the sight of God," that when their annual feasts were held, he always rose early the next morning, calling them together to offer sacrifice for them, according to the number of them all, fearing that they might have sinned against God in their hearts.

Nor did Job's profession rest here. It was not sufficient for him to feel his heart glow with love to God, and to practise family religion, but regarding the obligations under which his riches laid him, to his fellow-man, he attended to the wants of the wretched. Taking consolation to himself for this when he was reduced to abject misery, "I delivered," said he, "the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him: The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judg-

ment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not I searched out: And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth."—"Did I not weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor?" He could also say that he had not withheld the poor from their desire, nor caused the eyes of the widow to fail: that he had not eaten his morsel alone, but the fatherless had partaken thereof: that they were brought up with him, as a father, and as a guide—that he had not seen any perish for want of clothing, or any without covering: and that their loins had blessed him warmed with the fleece of his sheep.

One would have supposed, that such a man as this, would have been sheltered from the evil day; but God, who wisely orders all things, thought fit he should suffer a reverse of fortune, and of honour. It is said, that on a certain day, the holy angels, presented themselves before God, to give an account of their mission; and Satan, the prince of the fallen angels, appeared also at the bar of the tribunal; by which we are to understand, that God rules all orders of beings; that the evil spirits who oppose themselves to his will, are restrained in their operations by his Almighty hand, and that they can do nothing without his permission. This observation is borne out by the colloquy between God and Satan, on this occasion: "Whence comest thou?" was the question put to this rebellious spirit. He replied with audacity, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." What his employ is, the apostle tells us; he goeth about "as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." The Almighty next inquired of him, whether he had considered his servant Job, telling him, that there was none like him in all the earth; and that he was one that feared God, and eschewed evil. In reply, Satan charged Job with being a hypocrite, whose piety was the result of his prosperity; and affirmed, if that

was *touched*, he would curse his Maker, and quit his service. Although the Almighty knew what was in man, and was convinced of his servant's integrity, nevertheless, to make it manifest to all the world, throughout all ages, he gave this bold adversary of the righteous, permission to ruin all he had; prohibiting him from laying his hand upon his person. With this authority he went forth, and soon after, a series of calamities were poured upon the head of the devoted sufferer. His sons and daughters were feasting in their elder brother's house, and every one was off their guard, when the Sabeans fell upon the oxen and the asses, and slew all the servants save one, who escaped, to tell the tidings. While yet he was relating this disaster, another messenger came with haste, and informed him that lightning from heaven had consumed his sheep, with the shepherds, and that he only was left. He had not ceased speaking, when a third arrived, and told him that the Chaldeans had seized upon the camels, and slain his servants with the edge of the sword.

Thus, at a stroke, the affluent and benevolent Job was reduced to the most abject poverty. But this was not all; another messenger arrived, with the heart-rending intelligence, that while his sons and daughters were feasting in their brother's house, a wind from the wilderness, fierce as a wild Simoom, smote the four corners of the house, and it fell, burying them all in its ruins. This was a dreadful addition to Job's calamities; he had, as we have already seen, the most tender concern, lest, in the midst of these entertainments, they should err; what, therefore, must have been his feelings, to hear that not only his beloved offspring were dead, but that they were cut off suddenly, in the midst of their mirth, and sent into eternity? We look, here, for the wild expression of sorrow, but we look in vain. Resigned to the will of God, Job heard with silence and calm composure, each tale of woe, till that of the destruction of his family, and then he arose, and rent his mantle, (the common token of affliction in those Eastern countries,) then deliberately fol-

lowing the usual customs of mourning, he shaved his head, and in humble submission, fell upon the ground and worshipped. "Naked," exclaimed he, "naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Thus was Satan baffled in his scheme; Job's integrity, and his confidence in God, outlived this furious storm, which had uprooted and swept away all his earthly comforts. "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." But Satan, when he is foiled in one attempt to seduce man from the paths of uprightness, is sure to make attacks from another quarter. Not long after he presented himself again before God, when the Almighty is represented as pleased with the conduct of Job, and as glorying that his foeman was defeated. "Still," said he, "he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause." In reply, the subtle fiend maintained, that Job was not proof against the loss of health; "skin for skin," says he "yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life: but put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face." It was, therefore, permitted that Job should thus be tried; and instantly, while yet he was smarting under his accumulated griefs, the cruel foe poured out his vengeance upon his person. He was covered with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto the crown of his head, so that he sat down among the ashes, and took himself a potsherd, to scrape himself withal.

What this disease was, is unknown, it being supernatural; but what he felt we may form some idea of by his mournful language: "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves against me."—"When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day: My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome."

But had he no friend to comfort him? Alas! not one. "He hath put my brethren," says he, "far from me, and my acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me." There was one, from whom he might have expected comfort—the wife of his bosom; but she, instead of administering consolation to his wounded mind, aggravated his woes by advice consonant to Satan's purpose. "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die." These were rash words, and they must have been painful indeed to Job's feelings, but they only served to evince the firmness of his religious principles. "He said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips."

After this the sufferer was visited by three friends from distant parts, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. These, when they saw him in the distance, could scarcely believe it was Job; and they lifted up their voices and wept, rending their mantles, and sprinkling dust upon their heads in token of their sorrow. And when they came near, they were so troubled that they could not speak, and they sat down with him seven days and seven nights, silent with grief. At the end of that period the patience of Job was overcome. He did not indeed charge God foolishly, or utter any profane words; nor did he arraign the Divine rectitude; his impatience showed itself in cursing the day of his birth, and wishing for the day of his death.

This occasioned a conference between his friends and himself, but it added to his sorrow. They insisted that God never inflicts uncommon strokes on man but for uncommon sins, and therefore they inferred and asserted that Job was a hypocrite. This is a very common error, and Job knew it to be such; he therefore vindicated himself in a very able and affecting manner. He maintained that he was no hypocrite; that he feared God; and that the

deepest afflictions are often the lot of the righteous here, while eternal misery alone is reserved for the wicked hereafter. By his reasonings and his protestations of innocence, they were put to silence.

Seeing this, Elihu, a young man who had listened to this interesting debate, modestly interposed as a moderator, reproving each by turns, and vindicating the ways of Providence. The wise reasonings of this youth had their due effect upon Job, for he replied not to them, as he did to the discourse of his three elder friends. They were indeed an introduction to his conviction, for when Elihu had ceased, God, out of the whirlwind, took a part in the controversy, confirming what Elihu had advanced in support of the rectitude of his providence, illustrating it by a grand display of his divine attributes. When the Almighty had ceased speaking, Job, convinced of his folly in maintaining his righteousness before God, humbled himself before his face, expressing his contrition in the most humiliating terms. "Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice; but I will proceed no further."—"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

He had no sooner repented, than God reproved his three friends for their misrepresentations of Providence, charging them to offer sacrifice, and to beg of Job to intercede for them. And now the dark cloud which had so long hovered over his devoted head, began to disperse, and the prospect to brighten around him: "his captivity was turned." The Almighty blessed him with twofold more than he had lost. His friends flocked around him with presents, and his wife also bare him the same number of children he had lost. To his three daughters, who were the most comely in the land, he gave the names of Jemima, Keziah, and Kerenhappuch, signifying that his prosperity, his happiness, and his glory was restored.

After his afflictions, Job lived one hundred and forty

years, and saw his descendants to the fourth generation. He died at the age of two hundred and ten years.

There is a thought can lift the soul
Above the narrow sphere that bounds it ;
A star that sheds its mild control
Brightest when grief's dark clouds surround it,
And pours a soft pervading ray
Life's ills can never chase away.

That thought and that star is hope, and that hope it was that supported Job in the hour of adversity—that enabled him to withstand the fiery assaults of his adversary, and to come out of the furnace of affliction “as gold tried in the fire.” “I know,” said he, “that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.” In all the chances and changes of this mortal life, may we enjoy the same like precious faith, that so we may, like him, rejoice in hope of a glorious resurrection.

For bitter were our sojourn here,
In this dark wilderness of sorrow,
Did not that rainbow beam appear,
The herald of a brighter morrow ;
A friendly beacon from on high,
To guide us to eternity. A. WATTS.

MOSES.

What prophet, by the sacred breath inspired,
 What friend of God, with holy raptures fired,
 Whose deathless name can equal glories share,
 Or with God's servant, Moses, can compare !
 With mortal eyes th' invisible he saw,
 On trembling Sinai's top received the law :
 From Egypt's fetters ransomed Israel brought,
 And in their sight great signs and mighty wonders
 wrought.

A NON.

BORN, A.M. 2433. DIED, 2553.

WHILE the character of Joseph, and the benefits derived from his administration, were fresh in the memory of the Egyptians, the Israelites were treated with kindness for his sake; but when another Pharaoh, or king, came to the crown, who had no personal knowledge of him, no regard was paid to his memory, no gratitude felt towards that saviour of the nation. His descendants, and those of his father's house, were beheld with a jealous eye, and considered as intruders into the country, and, from their increasing numbers, as formidable to the future peace and prosperity of the Egyptian state. Under this impression, Pharaoh called a council, in which it was resolved, in order to prevent the further increase of the Hebrews, that they should be removed from their pastoral employment to labour in public works under severe task-masters. This was accordingly carried into execution, and "they built for Pharaoh treasure-cities, Pithom and Raamses." But the end was not accomplished; for although the task-masters performed their mission with rigour, "the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew."

Pharaoh observed this, and enraged thereby, issued the sanguinary edict that all their male children should be strangled in the birth; but the Hebrew midwives, w^h-

were, on pain of death, to carry it into execution, fearing God, refused to obey the mandate. Another scheme was, therefore, adopted; all the male children born to the Hebrews were to be cast into Nile. This was a scheme which threatened indeed to desolate their race; but it tended to promote the designs of heaven, and proved the means of their deliverance. Jochebed, the wife of Amram, of the tribe of Levi, soon after this edict was promulgated, bare a son, for whom the parents hazarded their safety by concealing it in the house for three months. It is stated that this step was taken when it was observed that it "was a goodly child." The babe was very beautiful; but, we are not to suppose that Jochebed hid the child solely on account of its beauty. Josephus says that Amram was comforted in a vision, with an assurance that the child should not only escape death, but should prove the deliverer of the nation. This is very probable, for St. Paul asserts that Moses, when he was born, was hidden by his parents three months through faith; which clearly implies, that they had been favoured with some promise concerning him, for faith must have respect unto some intimation.

At length, however, it became impossible to conceal the child any longer; and the distressed parents were driven to the necessity of exposing him on the waters. But Jochebed was unwilling to give him up to immediate death; she, therefore, made a basket of bulrushes, daubing it within and without with slime and pitch, mineral and vegetable productions, that it might float upon the water, if haply some kind heart should be moved to pity for him.

This was certainly but a feeble bulwark against the many dangers to which the child must be exposed, but it was made use of in faith, and deliverance was looked for from heaven. The child was committed to the waters, and Miriam, his sister, was stationed near to watch the event.

Slow glides the Nile; amid the margin flags
Closed in a bulrush ark, the babe is left,—
Left by a mother's hand. His sister waits
Far off; and pale, 'tween hope and fear, beholds

The royal maid, surrounded by her train,
 Approach the river bank,—approach the spot
 Where sleeps the innocent ; she sees them stoop
 With meeting plumes ; the rushy lid is oped,
 And wakes the infant, smiling in his tears ;
 As when along a little mountain lake,
 The summer south-wind breathes with gentle sigh,
 And parts the reeds, unveiling as they bend,
 A water-lily floating on the wave. GRAHAME.

The babe was discovered by Pharaoh's daughter, whose steps were guided by an overruling providence to the banks of the river, with her maidens, and when it was taken out from among the flags, it wept. Moved with compassion, she instantly resolved, although she was aware that it belonged to the despised Hebrew race, to preserve it from destruction. For this purpose, she inquired for a nurse ; and Miriam, who had now mingled with the attendants, offered to recommend a Hebrew woman to undertake the charge. Her offer was accepted, and Miriam, with joyful steps, ran to fetch the babe's own mother, who received it from the princess, with a charge to nurse it for her, for wages.

After the child was weaned, Jochebed took him to court, and the princess received him affectionately, giving him the name of Moses, which signifies "taken out of the water," and retaining him in the palace, for the purpose of having him educated as her own son, and he became learned "in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." His accomplishments as a scholar, and achievements as a soldier, have been celebrated by ancient authors. He was also regarded as a prince. But at the age of forty years, he nobly renounced his connexions in the palace, and all his flattering prospects of wealth and power, and determined to take part with the despised Israelites, "choosing rather," as St. Paul observes, "to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

At this time, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, and when he saw how deeply they suffered, he was moved with compassion for them, and he had a desir

to deliver them from their bondage. This desire, however, received a severe check from among themselves. Seeing an Egyptian, one day, smiting an Hebrew, his sympathy was excited in his behalf, and he slew the oppressor, and buried him in the sand. By this deed, he hoped his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them. But while he was ready to assert their rights, they were so dejected by oppression, and their faith was so weak, that so far from seconding his endeavours, they chid him for his zeal in their service. The next day, Moses, perceiving two of his brethren contending, undertook to mediate, telling them they were brethren. But the one who did his neighbour wrong, replied, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?" By this opprobrious speech, Moses found that his deed was generally known, and that he was not safe, even among his own brethren. Pharaoh also heard of the deed, and incensed against him, gave orders that he should be put to death. Moses, therefore, fled for his life, to Midian, a district of Stony Arabia.

In the plains of Midian, there was a well common to all the natives of the place, for watering their cattle. Hither Moses came; and as he sat upon it, the seven daughters of Jethro, priest, and probably prince of Midian, came to water their flocks, in which office he assisted them, and protected them from the violence of some neighbouring shepherds. For this act, he was rewarded by the gratitude of Jethro, who invited the poor wanderer to abide under his roof. An attachment was soon formed between these kindred spirits, and Moses was "content to dwell with the man." And Jethro gave him Zipporah, his daughter, to wife, by whom he had two sons, Gershom and Eliezer. And now

For Zipporah, a shepherd's life he leads,
And in her sight deceives the subtle hours.—DRAYTON.

This was a pleasing mark of humility in Moses. He who had lived as a prince in Egypt—had been, it is sup-

posed, heir to the crown of Egypt, and was appointed to be "a king in Jeshurun,"—becomes a humble shepherd. But Moses was the child of providence, and every scene in his life showed the directing hand of God. He was led from the palace of Egypt, to the peaceful plains of Arabia, that he might obtain a conquest over his passions, become acquainted with true religion, and be fitted for that high office to which he was ordained. Nor was it for these purposes alone: while here in retirement, it is supposed that he penned, under the influence of Divine inspiration, the books of Genesis and Job; books which have conferred immortality upon his name, and blessings on mankind, without the former of which the Bible would be incomplete.

In this pleasing obscurity Moses spent twenty years, during which period, the Israelites continued to suffer misery and toil under the lash of their oppressors. At the end of that time, however, the king, from whose face Moses fled, died, and Pharaoh Amenophis succeeded him. And not only did he succeed him in the throne, but in his cruelty toward the Hebrews. Under his reign, the yoke of their afflictions became insupportable, and "their cries and their groans came up unto God, who remembered his covenant with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob," and came down to deliver them by the hand of his servant Moses, to whom he appeared in a flame of fire, in a bush, as he was tending his flock near Mount Horeb. The flame burned brightly, but the bush still remained unconsumed. This Moses observed; and surprised at the phenomenon, proceeded to the place to ascertain the cause,

When the Eternal Rector of the skies,

Thus breathed to Moses from the quickening fire, (DRAYTON.)

"Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Moses, trembling with awe, hid his face, and obeyed the injunction; and the Almighty proceeded to reveal himself as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. Then expressing his compassion for Israel's sufferings, and his deter-

mination to deliver them from their yoke of bondage, and of putting them into possession of the land of Canaan, which is described as "a good land and a large, a land flowing with milk and honey;" he related their misery, as though he would fain excite the sympathy of Moses on their behalf, and concluded by offering to send him unto *them*, and to Pharaoh, as their deliverer.

We have already seen, that Moses, while in Egypt, had a desire to avenge their cause, and that he gave up all his honours for that purpose. We should, therefore, have expected, that he would have embraced the offer with gladness. But how different was his conduct! His courage seemed extinguished, and his zeal exhausted; he shrunk from the important mission, though God himself gave the command, and promised success. Many were the objections he raised against the Divine Will. His own littleness—the ignorance and obstinacy of the people—they would not hearken to him—his want of eloquence, and his slowness of speech. These, however, were removed by the Almighty, as quickly as they were expressed by the unyielding shepherd; and miracle was added to promise, to encourage him to accept the charge; but it was in vain. When no excuse was left, Moses rudely threw away the charge, saying, "O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." This perverseness kindled the anger of God against him; but it flamed not in judgment: it was only expressed to bring him to a sense of duty, and it had the effect. Moses had withstood love and solicitation, reasoning and miracles, with an unbending spirit, but he could not withstand the terrors of the wrath of heaven. When these were revealed, he submitted to the Divine injunction, and obtained pardon. Then receiving instructions for his conduct, and a promise that Aaron his brother should be called to assist him as a spokesman unto the people, he led his flock to Midian, and obtained Jethro's consent to visit his brethren in Egypt.

While on his way thither, fresh assurances were given

him of the Lord's protection and assistance; in dependence upon which, he hastened onward to contend with the king of Egypt, and to vindicate Israel's wrongs. A circumstance also occurred as he was at an inn, which, from the brevity of the history, is very obscure. It appears clear, however, that some judgment overtook him for neglecting to circumcise his son Eliezer, which, now he was appointed leader to the Israelites, was inexcusable. But "Zipporah" (according to the version of the Septuagint,) "having circumcised the child, fell at the feet of Moses, and said, The blood of the circumcised is stopped; and, so saying, she returned home to her children to Midian." And Moses pursued his journey, deeply impressed, no doubt, through this affair, with the danger of disobedience.

Soon after this, Aaron, directed of God, met him. Their meeting, after so long an absence, was very affectionate, and being mutually encouraged by the coincidence of the intimation given them, they hastened to unfold their commission to their brethren, which they confirmed by exhibiting those miraculous powers which were given them for the conviction of both the Israelites and Pharaoh, to whom they were sent. The Israelites were immediately convinced of their divine authority, and received them as messengers from heaven, testifying their gratitude and obedience by joining in a solemn act of adoration to Him who had looked upon their affliction.

Having now all Israel on his side, Moses, as prompt as he was before reluctant to obey, with Aaron boldly entered into Pharaoh's presence, and addressed him with this dignified language: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." Pharaoh, however, was not so easily convinced of their mission as their brethren had been. Offended at this freedom of speech, he haughtily refused to accede to the request, demanding in reply, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." But notwithstanding this refusal, Moses and Aaron

urged their request, and pleaded Israel's cause with earnestness; but their zeal, served only to increase the rage of the tyrant, and the burdens of the people; and they themselves were threatened by Pharaoh, and accused by their brethren of having evil designs.

Although Moses had been informed that Pharaoh would not consent to their departure till compelled by necessity, he was not prepared for such a severe trial as this. He complained unto God of the treatment he met with, and murmured at his appointment. He was ready, indeed, to abandon the work, though he was assured of eventual success. The Almighty added one promise to another, to remove his fears and confirm his faith, and he sent him again with words of consolation to his brethren; but their spirits were broken through excess of grief, and they refused to be comforted. This increased his despondency, and when the Lord again directed him to go again unto Pharaoh with his commands, he urged a former objection, his lack of eloquence. But at length the contest between God and his prophet was decided. The Almighty invested him with powers to execute judgment upon Egypt, by which Pharaoh might know that the Lord was indeed "the God of the whole earth." "See," said he, "I have made thee a god unto Pharaoh." Never were such powers conferred upon any other mere mortal as these. The shepherd of Midian was to appear before Egypt's king, vested with attributes above all created dignities and power, having the elements at his command, and life and death at his disposal. It is no wonder, therefore, that from this time his courage was undaunted, and his diligence unwearied. With his brother Aaron as his constituted prophet, he went again to Pharaoh, and boldly demanded of him the release of the Hebrews. The proud monarch regarded them with contempt, and required a miracle of them in support of their pretensions as ambassadors of the supreme God; Aaron, therefore, at the command of Moses, threw down his rod, and it became a serpent. Upon seeing this, Pharaoh sent for his magi-

cians, and they were permitted to perform a similar act by their enchantments. Their rods became serpents, but the rod of Aaron swallowed up their rods, thus demonstrating the superiority of the first miracle, and the reality of the mission of Moses. But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not let the people go, as the Lord had said.

Moses next received a command to present himself before the king early in the morning, when he went to pay his adoration to the river Nile, which he did; and the tyrant again refusing his request, Aaron stretched out his rod over the favourite river, and it became blood, and all the fish, which formed a considerable part of their sustenance, died. Nor was the Nile affected alone; all their waters were changed, so that "there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt." This miracle the magicians were also permitted to imitate, (probably on the waters found by digging,) thus contributing to their own misery. "And Pharaoh turned, and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also."

Seven days did this fearful visitation prevail; and though the situation of the Egyptians was dreadful in the extreme, yet Pharaoh continued obdurate: nor did he relent when Moses repeated his request, with a threat of another visitation should he refuse. The same river was made to pour forth frogs in such numbers as to fill the cottage and the palace. This judgment was, in part, also imitated by the magicians; but the plague was so dreadful to Pharaoh, that he promised, if the frogs were removed, that he would let the people go. Accordingly, they *were* removed, but the tyrant violated his word; upon which, without any warning, a third judgment, more loathsome than the preceding, was inflicted. The dust was smitten, and it became lice, throughout all the land of Egypt, upon man and beast. The very magicians themselves suffered from this visitation, and yet they were so determined in their opposition to the Divine power, that they endeavoured to imitate it, although it would increase the evil.

But their powers were limited, their enchantments failed, and themselves were obliged to confess it was "the finger of God," yet, notwithstanding their impotence was confessed, Pharaoh's infidelity remained; his heart was alike proof against warnings and miracles.

Although the Nile had twice been made a scourge to chastise Pharaoh and his people for their impiety, on the banks thereof, as he was about to pay his blind adoration to it, Moses accosted him again, repeating his request, and threatening him with the judgment of a swarm of flies, which came and covered the whole land of Egypt, except the land of Goshen. Again Pharaoh was constrained to give his consent that the people might go, in order to obtain a removal of the judgment; but his word was once more broken. Upon this, Moses remonstrated with him, and another judgment followed; a grievous disorder seized upon their cattle, and thousands died. The people also were smitten with a disease, consisting of boils, and of blains, so that the magicians could not stand before Moses.

But fearful as these judgments were, the pride of Pharaoh remained unsubdued, and Moses was again commissioned to denounce the vengeance of the Almighty against him. "Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me. For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth." And Moses stretched out his rod, and a desolating tempest arose; thunder and hail, and fire mingled with the hail, desolated all the land of Egypt. This was a judgment very severe in its nature, thunder and hail being a rare occurrence in that country. Pharaoh himself seems to have felt its terrors deeply, for it brought more conviction to his heart than any judgment he had before experienced. He sent for Moses, and confessed he had sinned, and promised if there were no more thunderings and hail, the people should stay no longer; but when

they had ceased "he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants."

And now again the messengers of Jehovah appeared in the monarch's presence, and threatened him with such a swarm of locusts as should devour all the residue that had escaped the hail. This is one of the most terrible calamities that can overtake an eastern nation. Pliny says, "This plague is attributed to the anger of the gods, for they are sometimes very great, and make such a noise with their wings, that you would suppose them to be a larger kind of flying creatures. They also darken the sun, while people from below behold them with a painful solicitude, lest they should alight upon their fields. Their strength is very great; and, as if it was a small matter to fly over the seas, they run over immense tracts of land, and in the harvest overspread the earth with a dreadful cloud, burning up almost every herb by their touch, and biting and eating through everything, even the doors of their houses." No wonder, then, that the servants of Pharaoh exclaimed, when they heard this threat, "How long shall this man be a snare unto us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?" Upon this, Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron in haste, giving permission for them to go, on condition of their leaving their children behind. But this could not be; and Moses stretched forth his rod, and brought by a furious east wind, which blew all day and night, these ministers of vengeance came darkening all the land, and devouring the herb of the field. And now again Pharaoh confessed his sin, the plague was again removed, but his hardness of heart returned; at which Moses gave the signal, and the light of heaven was withdrawn from the Egyptians, while the Hebrews had light in their dwellings. This darkness, which was such as might be felt, continued three days, and must have been peculiarly afflicting and humiliating to that nation; since their great deity, the sun, obscured of his glory, and darkness, another of their deities, were made

the instruments of their punishment. So dreadful was it, that Pharaoh again sent for Moses, to obtain deliverance from its terrors. But he was not yet brought to give his full consent to their departure; the people might go, but their property must remain. Moses, however, could not consent to leave "even a hoof behind;" which so enraged Pharaoh, that he drove him away from his presence, threatening that if he appeared again his life should be the forfeit. By this deed he sealed the warrant for his own destruction; God himself came now to vindicate the cause of Israel: "About midnight," said he to Moses, "will I go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die." This terrible judgment Moses, ere he departed from Pharaoh, denounced against him; after which he saw his face no more.

Before this was inflicted, God commanded Moses to give direction to the people to prepare for their departure. They were to demand articles of silver and articles of gold, of the people; which, from the universal dread that now pervaded Egypt, of the God of Israel, they readily obtained,—a just retribution for injuries received. They were also to slay for every family a lamb, without blemish, of a year old; the flesh of which, in remembrance of their cruel bondage, was to be eaten with bitter herbs, in haste, with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and their staff in their hand, as men passing from slavery to freedom. To preserve their habitations from the judgment, they were directed to sprinkle the side posts, and upper door-posts of each house, with the blood of this paschal lamb, that so, when the destroying angel should appear, they might escape. In commemoration of this signal interposition, this solemn rite was instituted a standing sacrament in the Jewish church. It was also designed to shadow forth the Paschal Lamb, Jesus Christ, who should in the fulness of time appear as the deliverer of mankind from their spiritual captivity.

And now midnight came; and while the Israelites were feasting upon this sacrifice ready to march onward, the

angel of the Lord passed through the land, and smote all the first-born of Egypt. "There was not a house where there was not one dead."

From the couches of slumber ten thousand cries
 Burst forth 'mid the silent dread ;
 The youth by his living brother lies,
 Sightless, and dumb, and dead !
 The infant lies cold at his mother's breast.
 She had kissed him alive as she sank to rest,
 She awakens—his life hath fled.

ANON.

This was the hour of their deliverance ; Pharaoh and his people, struck with dread at this visitation, apprehended that the destruction would be general ; they were, therefore, urgent for their departure ; for, they said, "We be all dead men." Thus, "with a high hand and outstretched arm," did the Lord lead his people out of Egypt, at the very time he had foretold to Abraham, which was four hundred and thirty years after the first call of that patriarch.

This was an astonishing event: six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, with a mixed multitude of other nations, who were permitted to cast in their lot with them, went forth from the midst of a mighty nation, without the means of any other force than that of Divine power. Well, then, may the sacred writers continually advert to this interposition in strains of admiration !

At their departure, Moses, instead of taking them the nearest way to Canaan, led them along the skirts of the great wilderness which bounds Egypt and Petræa, to a place called Pihahiroth, or "the entrance of the valley," on the margin of the Red Sea. This was to all appearance an ill-chosen route ; on each hand were impassable mountains ; in the rear they were exposed to the attacks of an enemy, while in the front lay a vast expanse of water. But the Lord had given this direction, and he was their guide : for

With a column of cloud and a fiery light
 He led them by day and he led them by night.

But although they were thus favoured with the

constant token of the Divine presence, their trials were not yet ended. Pharaoh, whose terrors had abated, repented that he had let Israel go; and gathering all his forces, pursued them with a full determination to subdue or destroy them. When the Israelites descried them in the distance, forgetting the miracles which had been wrought for them, and heedless of the presence of God, they upbraided Moses. "Because," said they, "there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" This was a critical moment for this eminent saint; but he was not cast down. Animated by the strongest faith, while the general voice was against him, all unmoved, he encouraged them to wait in expectation of the Divine assistance. "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever: the Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." Moses then had recourse to prayer; and while yet he was fervent in his supplications, he received a reply "Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." At that instant, the column of cloud removed from the front to the rear, and formed a barrier between them and the Egyptians. The command was obeyed; the people pressed onward to the sea shore, and they had no sooner arrived there, than

. The man of God
O'er the wide waters lifts his mighty rod,¹
And onward treads; the circling waves retreat,
In hoarse, deep murmurs, from his holy feet;
And the chased surges, inly roaring, show
The hard wet sand and coral hills below.

Through these divided waters the Hebrews passed dryshod; Pharaoh also passed in after them, regardless of the roaring of the billows thus supernaturally heaped aloft, and of the miraculous pillar before him. And now the Israelites had gained the opposite shore; and the whole host of Pharaoh were hastening through the deep, when lo,

Again the prophet stretched his dreadful wand :
With one wild crash the thundering waters sweep,
And all is waves—a dark and lonely deep ;
And strange and sad the whispering surges bore
The groans of Egypt to Arabia's shore.

HIBER.

The pride of Egypt was overwhelmed ; “there remained not so much as one of them.”

When Israel saw this, they feared the Lord and believed in him, and owned the mission of his servant Moses. As for that prophet, as he stood and contemplated the power and goodness of God, his feelings indited one of the most magnificent odes of praise that was ever written. In his ascriptions the whole multitude joined, with heart-felt gratitude; after which, they joyfully advanced (still guided by the pillar of cloud) a three-days' march into the wilderness. But their gratitude and their joy did not long continue; they no sooner felt the difficulties of their wandering state than they murmured against Moses. The want of water first distressed them; at their next stage this was increased; they found water, but it was so bitter that they could not drink it. At this they rebelled; but Moses did not complain; he cried unto the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree, which being cast into the waters rendered them sweet. But this miracle was only remembered while they enjoyed its blessings. When their provisions failed, in deep despondency they accused Moses of bringing them into the wilderness to slay them with hunger; and sinfully wished they had died, by the hand of the Lord, as they sat by “the flesh-pots of Egypt.” Still, however, we find Moses patient; and still the Almighty gracious and forbearing. The man of God supplicates; and the Lord supplies them with bread from heaven in the morning, and quails in the evening, and these continued to descend every day, the Sabbath excepted, till they entered the promised land.

Thus they continued to journey onwards, but when they arrived at Rephidim, they were again in want of water, and again their former mercies were forgotten, and they revolted against Moses: so violent were they, that

we find him now complaining that they were ready to stone him. Who could wonder if, for such perverseness, judgments had descended upon them? But the ways of God are not as our ways; He gave the command, and Moses smote with his potent rod the rock of Horeb.

And there issued a steam from its adamant breast,
Which, with river-like course, through the wilderness pressed,
Supplying their host as they passed on their way,
And proclaiming a miracle day unto day.

Here, at Rephidim, the people remained awhile; and while yet faint and weary with their journey, the Amalekites, descendants of Esau, treacherously came up against that part of the camp most incapable of resisting the attack. At this the peaceful Moses was compelled to give orders to the Israelites to arm themselves to battle; he sent Joshua with an armed band against them, while himself and Aaron, with Hur, ascended a mount to watch the event and to pray for success. While he stretched forth his hands toward heaven, Israel prevailed; but when they drooped, the Amalekites had the advantage. His companions seeing this, seating him on a stone, supported each an arm, and the Amalekites were overthrown,—a practical illustration of the precept, “that men ought always to pray and not to faint.” This victory being obtained by prayer, the praise was ascribed to God; and an altar to commemorate the event was reared, and inscribed to Jehovah-nissi, “The Lord my banner.”

The next transaction we have to notice, in the history of Moses, is one of private life; and equally amiable does he there appear as in his public duties. During his sojourn in Egypt, Zipporah and his children remained under the protection of Jethro, her father. This good man hearing that Moses and the Hebrews were in the neighbourhood, taking his daughter and grandchildren, hastened to meet him and to restore them to his arms. Their intercourse was very pleasing and instructive; it was more than a social meeting. Jethro, with pure delight, rejoiced for all the good which the Lord had done

to Israel, and testified his joy in the presence of all Israel, in his priestly capacity, by offering up a solemn sacrifice to God. Afterwards, all the Jewish elders ate bread with the father-in-law of Moses; which act indicated a covenant of amity between the parties, as the sacrifice did a covenant with God. By Jethro's advice, Moses appointed magistrates or judges, to hear the causes of the people, reserving only the most intricate for his own decision. This was wise counsel; and the advice given by this excellent man on the choice of proper persons to fill the office was equally wise, and is replete with pious feeling. "Thou shalt provide," says he, "out of all the people, able men, such as fear God,—men of truth, hating covetousness."

When Jethro had departed, Moses removed to Mount Sinai, where the Hebrews pitched their camp and remained a whole year, in accordance with the declaration made to Moses at the bush: "When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." To the summit of this mountain, the column of cloud which had hitherto led their way, removed. Hither Moses was summoned to receive the Divine command, and by him a message was sent to the people, requiring them to enter into a compact with Jehovah. He proposed to make them his peculiar treasure, above all people, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, on condition that they would hearken to his voice and obey his statutes. To this proposal, with one voice, they exclaimed, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Three days were then set aside for the people to prepare for the receiving of those statutes from the mouth of God, and when the appointed time arrived, Jehovah himself cited them to appear. "There were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai

was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice." At this dread scene, well might the Israelites tremble; Moses himself was struck with awe; and no wonder, for the very words of the Voice, which were the Ten Commandments, were sufficient to fill the holiest mind with alarm. These commandments were given, accompanied with the sound of the trumpet, to denote their immutability and universality, and they were given by an audible voice because they concern all men. But Moses drew near into the thick darkness where God was, to receive the judicial and ceremonial statutes privately. These the prophet revealed to the people, who testified their full consent to them; and the compact was ratified by sacrifice and sprinkling of blood.

Being thus prepared, Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, obtained a sight of the glory of God within the sacred inclosure; but Moses himself, more highly favoured than the rest, was commanded to enter the cloud to receive the laws and ordinances ordained for the government of Israel. There he held a conference with the Lord God Almighty forty days and forty nights, at the conclusion of which he received two tables of stone, whereon were written the Ten Commandments by the finger of God.

We come now to an incident which shows the perverseness of the human heart: while yet Moses was in the Mount with God, the Israelites acted with insolent contempt towards both Jehovah and his prophet. Casting off their authority, they requested Aaron to make them gods to go before them, alleging that they knew not what was become of Moses, and in an evil hour, Aaron complied with their demands, without even urging a single remonstrance against it. He desired them to bring him their golden ornaments, out of which he made them a

golden calf, the common idol of Egypt. Before this calf he built an altar, and proclaimed a feast unto the Lord ; and the people offering burnt sacrifice, and bringing peace-offerings, cried before it, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

We now return to Moses : as he was about to descend from the mountain, the Lord informed him of their evil doings, and purposed to destroy them immediately, and to make of him a great nation in their stead. This was a flattering prospect for Moses, and this a favourable moment to be revenged on them for their many insults towards him ; but he sought not his own glory, neither harboured he revenge in his bosom. On the contrary, he yearned over rebellious Israel, loving them as a father his children. He felt also a concern for the Divine honour, which was engaged to bring them up from the house of bondage unto the land of their fathers ; he therefore stood between God and his people, and interceded for them in the most pathetic terms. His intercessions prevailed ; and Moses descended from the mountain with a heart lightened in part of its burden, but still aching for their folly. As he approached the camp, he saw the people dancing to the sound of music round their insensible deity, and filled with indignation at the sight, he cast the tables which he had just received from Jehovah, out of his hands, and brake them in pieces ; then with holy zeal, he seized the idol, and, reducing it to powder, mixed it with water and compelled them to drink it, thus converting their sin into a punishment. Aaron was severely reprov'd for his cowardice in complying with their desires ; and had not Moses prayed for him, he would have been cut off as a monument of God's righteous judgment. Nor did the matter rest here ; although Moses had saved the people from utter extirpation, the crime was too flagrant to pass unpunished. At God's command, Moses commissioned the Levites to execute vengeance on their

idolatrous brethren, and three thousand were slain by the sword.

After this, Moses again ascended the mountain to intercede for them. He confessed their guilt, but solicited their pardon, adding this remarkable request, "If not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written;" or, in other words, Let me die before they are destroyed. But this could not be; the Almighty replied, "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." And thus it happened, for the whole of that idolatrous generation died in the wilderness. Nevertheless, the mediation of Moses was effectual in obtaining their present pardon, and a promise that the forfeited favour of his presence as their conductor should be restored.

The success of one petition gave Moses confidence to prefer another; but his familiarity with God appears at this time to have induced him to ask too much. He asked of the Majesty of Heaven a sight of his glory! This was indeed a bold request for dust and ashes to make; but God was not displeased at it; for though he did not grant it to its full extent (no man being able to look upon God and live), yet, in the figurative language of Scripture, he hid him in a cleft of the rock, and covering him with his hand, made his glory to pass before him. Moses was then again summoned to the summit of the mountain, whither he went, taking with him two tables of stone, on which the Commandments were to be renewed. Here he again interceded for the people, and God ratified his covenant with them, and repeated his promises to them.

As before, the prophet remained forty days and forty nights upon the mountain, during which time he was instructed in the most minute particulars of the Jewish polity, and he was then sent down with God's holy law written upon the tables. He brought down with him also another proof of his Divine commission. As he drew

near to the people, his countenance shone with such lustre that they were afraid to look upon him till he had put a veil upon his face. This, it appears, he afterwards constantly wore except in the tabernacle, while holding intercourse with God: every time, therefore, they looked upon him, they were reminded of that supreme authority under which he acted.

Immediately after his descent, Moses appointed all the ordinances of the sacred service according to the directions he had received, and the pattern shown to him in the mount: in all which he was faithful as a servant for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken hereafter in the Gospel dispensation.

At length, when all the institutions were established, the camp broke up, and their march was renewed: in the second month of the second year, the cloud rose up from the tabernacle, and took the direction of the desert of Paran. Here the Israelites displayed their former discontent, and the provocation was so great that the fire of God went forth and consumed many of them; but Moses again interceded for them, and the judgment was removed. They seemed, however, to have reaped but little advantage from past experience, for immediately after we find they murmured against the bread of God, and "required meat for their lust." This was very distressing to Moses; unable, indeed to bear longer with their perverseness, he complained to the Lord that the burden of the government was too great for him; and, in compassion to his infirmities, he was directed to appoint a judicial court of seventy elders to relieve him of his toil. Here the character of Moses presents itself to us in a very amiable light; after he had chosen the elders, the spirit of prophecy rested upon two young men in the camp, named Eldad and Medad. This was told him by Joshua, who, jealous of his master's honour, considered it infringed by this act, and therefore advised him to restrain them. But the mind of this man of God was superior to envy: he rejoiced to hear of the attainments of others in

the service of Jehovah, and wished that not only these, but all the Lord's people were prophets.

But we return to notice the murmurings of the Israelites on account of the want of flesh: their desire was gratified, but it was in displeasure. The Lord sent them meat to the full, but!

While yet they were eating, on Israel's brow
His vengeance descended, and laid their pride low.

Multitudes of them perished in the enjoyment of that which they had so insolently demanded.

About this time the meekness of Moses was tried in a quarter the least to be expected. His own brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, imagining that they possessed not that authority to which they were entitled, murmured against him. "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not also spoken by us?" This was the real cause of their contention; but their pretence was, that he had married a woman of Ethiopia, although that circumstance had happened before his mission, and was contrary neither to divine or human laws. To these reproaches Moses made no reply, a striking evidence of the surpassing meekness of his temper. But they did not escape punishment; God himself undertook to vindicate his servant's cause; Miriam, being the aggressor in this sedition, was struck with leprosy, and Aaron was made to tremble for his own safety. They confessed their fault, and submissively entreated him whom they had so deeply wounded to pray for them, and he cried unto the Lord, "Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee." His prayer was heard, and Miriam, after being shut out of the camp seven days as a public example, was restored to health, and again received into the congregation.

The Hebrews now approached the confines of Canaan and Moses, directed of God, selected one man out of every tribe to go forward to examine its quality, and the strength of its inhabitants. They went accordingly, and took a survey of it from south to west, proceeding near the course of the Jordan in their way out, and returning

through the midst of the country along the borders of the Sidonians and Philistines. On their return, we may picture to ourselves these wanderers of the wilderness pressing round the spies, to hear their report of this promised land of rest, which had been represented to them by God himself in such glowing terms. With what eagerness of expectation they surround them! But how great is their apparent disappointment! Ten of the number sent declare it to be not only an infertile land, incapable of supporting those who possessed it, but the inhabitants as being unconquerable. This filled their minds with despondency, nor could the faithful representations of Joshua and Caleb disperse it. They reproached Moses with deceiving them, and determined to make themselves a captain who should head their return to Egypt. At this Moses fell upon his face before them, entreating them to desist from their sinful purpose, and importuning heaven for them. The Almighty interposed, and threatened to destroy them, and also offered to make of Moses a greater and mightier nation than they; but, as far from ambition and revenge as ever, he again fervently pleaded for their forgiveness; and at his intercession the Divine judgment was stayed, and the people were preserved from utter extirpation. As a punishment, however, it was decreed that not one of that generation, save Joshua and Caleb, should enter into Canaan. This denunciation had such an effect upon this rebellious people, that many became desperate, and they resolved, in opposition to the remonstrances of Moses, and to the decree gone forth, that they would enter into the land. Accordingly, the next morning, they set out on their wild enterprise; but "the word of God standeth sure;" they were defeated by the inhabitants with great slaughter.

But Israel had not yet learned submission; a formidable rebellion now arose against Moses by two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation, at the instigation of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. This insurrection was headed by Korah, of the tribe of Levi, who, hopeless of arriving

at the priesthood while the civil and ecclesiastical government was in the hands of Moses and Aaron, took this step in order to gratify his ambitious desires. This was a severe trial to Moses; but like all other oppositions it tended to confirm his commission, and to crown him with fresh honours. After making an earnest appeal to the Almighty on his behalf, and that of his brother, he meekly reasoned with the leader of the faction, and referred the matter to the decision of God; not doubting that he would make manifest his integrity: "This do," said he to Korah: "take you censers, Korah, and all his company; and put fire therein, and put incense in them before the Lord tomorrow; and it shall be, that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy." This invitation Korah, desperate in rebellion and wilful in infidelity, accepted; but Dathan and Abiram refused to do so, the ground of their opposition being different from that of Korah, the one claiming the priesthood, as being of the tribe of Levi, the other the government, as being descendants of Reuben, the first-born of Jacob.

As soon as the day appeared Korah collected all the congregation against Moses and Aaron round the door of the Tabernacle ready for a revolt; but the Almighty appeared in defence of his servants. He bade them separate themselves from the assembly that he might consume them; but full of compassion for the misguided people, Moses and Aaron prostrated themselves on the ground before the Lord, and pleaded for them; their prayer was heard, and the people were commanded to flee the tents of the conspirators, lest they also should perish. This command was generally obeyed; but Dathan and Abiram, in derision of Moses, and in defiance of the power of the Almighty, stood at the door of their tents.

And now the moment of decision was come: "If," exclaimed the man of God, "If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the Lord hath not sent me: But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth,

and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord." He spake:

And earth wide yawning to their view,
Proud Dathan and Abiram's crew
Received; while vengeance flamed along,
And smote in death the rebel throng.

But this judgment was not sufficient to awe the rest into subjection. On the succeeding morrow they not only murmured against the prophet and the priest, but charged them with slaying the Lord's people, for which they were smitten with a plague, and fourteen thousand seven hundred were cut off, and the rest were saved from destruction only by the earnest prayer of the men whom they had reproached as murderers. An example of meekness and love exceeded only by Him, who, dying on the cross, prayed for his murderers in these emphatic words—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The Israelites, as a punishment for their rebellion, had been doomed to wander in the wilderness forty years, and little is recorded of them except their different removals from one encampment to another till just at the expiration of that period, at which time they pitched their tents in Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin. The murmuring generation which came out of Egypt had then become almost extinct, agreeably to the sentence passed upon them, and another had succeeded; and alas! not only in their generation, but in their rebellions. The water which had supplied their wants from the rock at Rephidim through all their journey now failed; an indication that they were about to exchange the wilderness for the promised land in which rivers and springs abounded. At this their fears were excited, and they openly wished they had died with those whom the earth had devoured, and the fire had consumed. Moses as usual, was the object of their resentment and reproach; but he replied not. Instead of reproving them he departed from them, and fell upon his face at the door of the tabernacle before the Lord in silent

agony of soul. Here he received a command to take his rod and gather the people together, and speak unto the rock before their eyes; and the Lord added, "it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock."

Moses accordingly took his rod, and all Israel stood before the rock. But what do we behold? the meek man Moses, wearied with their rebellions, instead of addressing the rock as he was commanded, reproving the people in vehement language: "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?" thus arrogating to himself that power which belongeth unto God alone. In the same temper of mind Moses smote the rock, and, impatient of delay, smote again; and the promised streams gushed forth. For this intemperate conduct, and this evident want of faith, the Lord reprovèd both Moses and Aaron, and declared that they should die in the wilderness. Accordingly, at the very next stage of their journey the effect of their transgression appeared; Moses was directed to accompany his brother Aaron to the top of Mount Hor to take his last farewell of him, and to see him die for that offence in which himself was the principal transgressor. Aaron died, and Moses placed his pontifical vestments on his son Eleazar by Divine command.

As they marched onward, although they had as it were, a foretaste of the conquest of Canaan, by the overthrow of some cities belonging to king Arad, who had treacherously attacked them; yet they again displayed their rebellious spirit by complaining of the want of, water and by loathing

The bread of God sent down from heaven.

For this rebellion, fiery serpents were commissioned to destroy them, and many thousands perished, which judgment had the effect of terrifying the people into at least a momentary submission. They confessed their crime, and again supplicated the injured Moses to plead into the offended Majesty of heaven in their behalf. He prayed,

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole: and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”

This singular remedy, with its miraculous effects, was designed not only to restore the Israelites, but also to be an instructive emblem to man in all ages of the world. Sin is more poisonous and destructive to the soul, than the venom of serpents to the body; but the power and grace of God are displayed in the removal of this malady by means similar to that which was adopted for the restoration of the Hebrews. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

Although Moses was prohibited from leading the people into Canaan, he had the delight of beholding the promises of God in part fulfilled, by the conquest of the Amorites, Moabites, and Edomites, who came out against them. He saw that the covenant made with Abraham was drawing nigh to a fulfilment; yet was his joy mixed with grief; the Hebrews conquered these heathen nations, but they were led to adopt their idolatrous practices, forsaking the worship of God.

With those that worshipped Baal they dwelt,
And at his shrine adoring knelt;
And with them impiously fed
On offerings laid before the dead.

On this occasion, inflamed with holy zeal, Moses, regarding the will and the glory of God, and the interest of the people at large, acted with the vigour necessary to stop the progress of this sin; he commanded the ringleaders to be put to death.

And now it was revealed to the prophet that his labours were drawing to a close; he received a command to go up into Mount Nebo to die. This appears to have

distressed his mind, and we cannot wonder at it; his heart was fondly set upon the good of rebellious Israel, and he naturally desired to conduct them into the land of promise, and to see them settled before he died. But the word of God was immutably fixed, and Moses meekly submitted to his will, praying that an able and pious leader might succeed him; and Joshua was appointed. Him, Moses initiated into the office before all the congregation, charging him to be steadfast in the important work to which he was consecrated. He then established a general release for the poor, at the end of every seven years, on which occasion the law was appointed to be read before all the people.

After this he pronounced in the hearing of the assembly a sublime ode, the opening of which is exquisitely touching: "Give hear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He." He then recapitulated the mercies of God towards their rebellious race, in the midst of which, his feelings were so overpowered with a sense of their proneness to rebellion, that he exclaimed in the fervour of his heart, "O that they were wise that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" Before he departed, he gave each tribe (as Jacob had before him) his prophetic blessing, closing his addresses with a lofty description of their stability in the land of promise: "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of

corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

And now the work of Moses, the servant of the Lord, was done. The prophet ascended the mountain, and from the heights of Pisgah took an enraptured survey of the fertile plains of Canaan which lay before him, and which, at his death, were to be put into the possession of the twelve tribes of Israel. Then, while yet his eye lacked not its lustre, and his natural strength knew no abatement, although he was in his hundred and twentieth year,

Without or agony or strife,
A death-like sleep upon him stole :
And to his God and endless life
He yielded up his happy soul:
While God—oh death most rare ! most blest !
Himself did lay his flesh to rest.

It is said, "no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." The character of Moses is fully shown in the various events of his life, and needs no eulogy. He was indeed a superior character; and yet there is One more superior, and "worthy of more glory, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house," namely, Jesus Christ, of whom Moses was an eminent type. As this great leader of the Jewish nation brought them forth from their house of bondage in Egypt, to a land of rest and liberty, so Jesus hath broken our chains, hath brought us out of our prison-house, and given us the liberty of the sons of God; and will finally bring us, if we look to Him, to a land where all is liberty and love—even to heaven.

BALAAM.

The Father who is holy, wise, and pure,
 Suffers the hypocrite or atheous priest
 To head his sacred courts and minister
 About his altar, handling holy things,
 Praying and bowing ; and vouchsafed his voice
 To Balaam, reprobate, a prophet yet
 Inspired. MILTON.

Slain in a conflict between the Israelites and Midianites, A. M. 2552.

It has been well said by one who knew the human heart, that "The love of money is the root of all evil;" for avarice has not only kept in bondage those who never knew God, but has also drawn aside many eminent characters, from the paths of holiness and moral rectitude. Nay, more ; it has steeled the heart of some against special warnings, the light of inspiration and the convictions of conscience. Thus it was with Balaam, whose conduct stands recorded in Holy Writ as a beacon to all professing Christians, to beware lest they also fall into the same error. Some commentators indeed, have represented Balaam as an idolater, on the ground of his skill in the art of divination ; but he appears rather to have been a prophet and a priest of the Most High God, who, living among idolaters that believed in enchantments, blended that profession with the worship of Jehovah, and that perchance to gratify that passion which ended in his ruin.

Balaam is introduced to our notice in the history of the Israelites, just at the conclusion of their wanderings. After they had defeated Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, they pitched their tents in the plains of Moab, which so alarmed Balak, the king of that country, that he wished to dislodge them. For this purpose, before the force of arms was employed, he had recourse to a practice common in that and other nations round,—to

magical art. Not daring, however, to trust to the skill and wisdom of his own enchanters against so potent a God as the celebrated God of Israel, whose fame was gone forth through all Canaan, he sent for Balaam, whose prayers and imprecations he doubted not would be effective. Miserable indeed was the superstition that beclouded the mind of Balak, which his message indicates: "Behold," said he, "there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me. Come now, therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people, for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land; for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed." With this message, bearing the rewards of divination in their hands, the messengers, princes of the land, came to the prophet, who, pleased with this prospect of honour and riches, instead of revolting at the idea of cursing a people who had neither done him or Balak harm, desired them to tarry all night with him, that he might inquire of the Lord whether he would give him permission to go with them. By what method Balaam intended to ask, is a mystery, but the answer given is explicit: "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed." Thus peremptorily prohibited from going, when the morning arose he dismissed the messengers; but fearing to offend Balak, by sending him the answer he had received, he simply stated that the Lord refused to let him go, plainly intimating that he himself was willing, however unhallowed the work. With this message the messengers returned; and they also, as obsequious as the prophet, altered even this concise reply; they told him Balaam refused to come with them. Upon this, imagining his embassy was not sufficiently splendid, and his rewards not sufficiently ample to win the prophet's attention, and being eager to obtain his object, Balak sent more honourable princes to entreat

his attendance, and to second their entreaties by promises of unbounded riches and high distinctions. The messengers came, and Balaam's first reply to them would indicate an utter contempt of riches: "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more." So far as words go, this was admirable, but it was evidently not the language of his heart,—*that* "went after his covetousness." Although the former answer of God was so peremptory, unwilling to lose this opportunity of advancement, he desired these messengers also to remain all night, that he might again take counsel of God. He did so, and he was allowed, if the messengers came to call him, to follow the bent of his own inclinations, only he was interdicted from speaking aught else than that which the Lord should indite.

Big with the expectations of preferment, as soon as the morning dawned, without waiting to be called, Balaam arose and went with the princes of Moab. But God's anger was kindled, because he went, or, in other words, because the wages of unrighteousness made him so willing to go, and he was suddenly stopped on the road; "the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him." The ass on which he rode saw the vision, and turned aside into the field to avoid it, at which the prophet was so enraged, that he smote her with a staff to turn her into the way again, and they went forward. But the angel again opposed his progress in a narrow path between the walls of two vineyards; here the ass again attempted to save Balaam by turning aside, but, by so doing, she crushed his foot against the wall, and he smote her again with greater severity: still they proceeded; but, on coming to a narrow pass, the angel stood, and the ass fell down, for which she was smitten with redoubled violence. For this he was rebuked; "the dumb ass speaking with man's voice, forbad the madness of the prophet." Instead, however, of perceiving the finger of God in this miracu-

lous transaction, his thirst for gold and honours made him proof even against miracles, and he wished for a sword to slay the faithful beast that had saved his life.

And now the prophet's own eyes were opened ; he saw the messenger of Jehovah standing before him with a sword drawn, as if prepared to destroy him, and in great terror he fell upon his face. After reproving Balaam for his barbarous treatment of the poor defenceless beast on which he rode, the angel declared the purport of his mission ; " Behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me." This extorted from Balaam a confession of his guilt, and a proposal, though evidently an unwilling one, to return. " I have sinned ;" " now, therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again." The angel, however, seeing his heart set upon his ambitious project, allowed him to follow his own inclination, but at the same time warned him, that he might be disappointed in his views ; inasmuch, as a restraint would be laid upon him, and words given him which only he might speak.

This circumstance has given rise not only to speculation but to ridicule. " The speaking ass," says a learned and pious writer, " from that time to this, hath been the standing jest of every infidel brother. Maimonides and others have conceived that the matter was transacted in a vision, but it appears rather more probable, from the whole tenour of the narration, that it was no visionary but a real transaction. The words of St. Peter show that it is to be so understood as he himself understood it, literally. The ass was enabled to utter such and such sounds, probably as parrots do, without understanding them ; and say what you will of the construction of the ass's mouth ; of the formation of the tongue and jaws, being unfit for speaking ; yet an adequate cause is assigned for this wonderful effect, for it is said expressly, that ' the Lord opened the mouth of the ass,' and no one who believes in a God can doubt of his power to do all this and much more. The miracle was by no means needless or super-

fluous; it was very proper to convince Balaam that the mouth and tongue were under God's direction, and that the same Divine power which caused the dumb ass to speak contrary to its nature, could make him, in like manner, utter blessings contrary to his inclinations." Another writer places this transaction before us in a very interesting light, and has rescued it, by the application of his profound researches, from the objections of infidels. He proves that the ass was regarded as sacred in Midian, being the symbol of Beal Peor, answering to Pan and Priapus, the worship of which divinities was grossly licentious. "In this miracle, therefore," adds a third writer, "we have another evidence of the confusion of the heathen idolatry, and a display of the sovereignty of Jehovah over all the powers of darkness."

When Balaam arrived at the court of the king of Moab, he was received with gladness, Balak only gently expostulating with him for not acceding to his first request; to which he replied with apparent firmness, that now he had come he had no power of himself to say anything, but that he must utter what God commanded. Notwithstanding this assertion, Balak did not fear of obtaining the blessing and the curse he desired. His dependence was upon the mercenary spirit of Balaam, imagining that he had power to bless and to curse at his pleasure. Eager, therefore, to obtain his wish, he took the prophet to an eminence, from whence to show him the camp of Israel. Here Balaam requested seven altars to be erected, on each of which he offered sacrifices. When this was done, and he had sought of God what to say, constrained by the spirit of inspiration, he pronounced aloud a blessing upon the tents of Jacob; at the close of which, he expressed his earnest desire that he might die the death of the righteous, and that his end might be like Israel's. Astonished at this conduct, Balak complained that Balaam had deceived him, but he again declared that he must obey the command of God; and yet he set himself, at Balak's request, again to seek for enchantments against

them, hoping thereby to obtain his riches and his honours. On another eminence, the same number of altars were erected, and offerings made; and again, compelled by inspiration, he uttered a benediction, and not a curse. So emphatic were his words, that Balak trembled lest he should hear his own destruction pronounced; and he cried, "Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all."

Still Balak hoped to obtain a curse upon Israel from the prophet's mouth; and still Balaam hoped to gratify his ambitious desires. A third time, upon another hill, seven sacrifices were offered, and enchantments sought against them; but it was all to no purpose: against his own will the prophet was again compelled to speak of the blessedness of Israel. He now pronounced a prediction of Israel's future greatness, and the destruction of their enemies, at which Balak, enraged and alarmed, exclaimed, "I called thee to curse mine enemies, and behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times. Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honour; but lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honour." This was, as we shall see from Balaam's subsequent conduct, a sore disappointment to him, and yet his reply was dignified. But he uttered not his own sentiments, his tongue was under the control of a divine agency: "Spake I not also unto thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak?" Balak was evidently mortified at the blessings poured upon the head of Israel; but how must his mortification have been increased to hear Balaam again under the spirit of prophecy, in defiance of his command, to flee unto his place, foretell, in more emphatic language than before, the blessedness of Israel, and the fate of the nations around them, in which his own is doomed to perish: "I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come

a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." This passage, taken in its literal sense, intimates that a mighty prince should arise from the people of Israel, who should conquer and bear rule over the kingdoms of Moab and Edom; and it was fulfilled in David. But it has a more important meaning than this; it has been invariably considered as referring to One, of whom David was a type and progenitor,—even the Messiah. He is the Star which "through the tender mercy of our God hath visited us," and to Him the sceptre of universal government is committed, "for He must reign till He hath put all enemies under his feet."

When Balaam had finished these predictions, he was driven from Balak's presence unrewarded. But he was unwilling to abandon the prospect of preferment, and being now left to his own ways and to speak his own words, he sought to regain the monarch's favour, and to be revenged on Israel. This he did in a way which betrayed a more depraved disposition than if he had poured the bitterest imprecations upon them. He advised Balak to entice them into idolatry and licentiousness by sending Midianitish women into their camp. The snare proved fatal; the Israelites were led away, and were punished for it by a pestilence, in which twenty-four thousand died. Nor did Balaam's revenge stop here; although he had pronounced Israel the blessed of the Lord, he still sought their destruction. He encouraged the Midianites to make war against them, and aided them in the contest; but he fell by his own devices. When these bitter foes of the Israelitish nation at God's command was subdued, Balaam was found among the fallen, slain by the sword; "a terrible example," as one well observes, "of talents wasted, advantages abused, and knowledge perverted," and all for honours and for wealth.

Do we condemn the conduct of Balaam? While we do so, let us pray that we may not fall into the same error—

covetousness. For "what," says our great Divine Teacher, "is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

All heads must come
To the cold tomb ;
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom from the dust.—SHIRLEY.

JOSHUA.

They fought by the waters of Merom,
That ran red with the blood of the foe ;
Israel followed the flying to Zidon,
And his sword laid the fugitives low.

For the Lord was with Joshua and Israel,
And 'twas well that the godless should see
How warriors, and monarchs, and nations,
At the breath of the Lord cease to be. J. W. D.

BORN, A.M. 2468. DIED, 2578.

WHILE yet the Israelites were on the desert side of Jordan, and while they were preparing to go up and possess the land of Canaan by force of arms, Moses, their illustrious leader, who had led them safely through so many and great dangers, was taken from them. But God leaves not himself without instruments to carry on and complete his great designs in the world. He had raised up Joshua the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, to undertake the charge and to stand in the place of Moses. The history of this excellent man is contained chiefly in the book which bears his name, the first book in the Bible which bears the name of an individual, and was probably written by himself with the exception of the last five verses, which

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are supposed to have been supplied by some authorized person.

It appears Joshua was not only the servant, but the intimate companion of Moses during the forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, from which high privilege he must have reaped great advantages in the cultivation of wisdom and piety. He must also have become intimately acquainted with the will of God with reference to his chosen people, and must have known that Israel would have to encounter many powerful foes; that they would have, indeed, to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan ere they could possess the land. This might have the effect of stimulating him to deeds of arms; for we find that very early in life he displayed a military talent, and Moses sent him against the Amalekites whom he conquered, gaining great honour by the victory. But Joshua was not distinguished for prowess in arms alone. He who had discomfited the Amalekites with the edge of the sword, paid a strict regard to his religious duties in the tabernacle, from which it is said "he departed not:" we see in him, therefore, the Lord's soldier. For his piety a peculiar honour was conferred upon him; he accompanied Moses to the Mount of God, where he spent forty days in devout retirement, while Moses within the cloud was receiving the law from the mouth of God. His attachment to that great man seems to have been of the most ardent kind. When he observed Eldad and Medad prophesying in the camp, imagining it was irregular and derogatory to the honour of his master, more zealous than prudent, he exclaimed: "My lord Moses forbid them." For this misguided zeal, Moses, who could behold the rising talents of others "with an unjaundiced eye," reproved him: "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!"

We have seen in the life of Moses, that he sent forward twelve men to explore the country, and that ten returned

with an evil, and two with a faithful report. One of these was Joshua; he, when the enraged multitude refused to prosecute their march by reason of the ill report, boldly opposed their perverseness, and represented the conquest of the country as practicable and easy, and ascribed the false report to cowardice. "The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us, a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not." This was a noble address, and one that ought to have allayed the fears and tumult of the people, but it tended to increase their rage; Joshua would have been stoned to death, had not the Lord interposed to save him. For this it was decreed that Joshua and Caleb *only*, of that generation, should enter into Canaan. An additional honour was conferred upon him; his name, which had been Oshea, was changed to Joshua, which signifies "the Lord the Saviour," and answers to Jesus in the Greek. "This appellation," says a pious writer, "was doubtless given to him in a mystical allusion to that spiritual Saviour, of whom, in a variety of respects, he was an eminent type."

When Moses was apprized of his approaching dissolution, he intreated the Lord to appoint a successor, and Joshua, at God's command, was set apart for the arduous employment by a public ordination. He was placed before the priest, while Moses put his hands upon him, and gave him a solemn charge as from the lips of the Almighty in the presence of all the people: "Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them, and thou shalt cause them to inherit it. And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee, he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: not, neither be dismayed."

At the death of this servant of the Lord, Joshua entered upon his arduous duties. Arduous indeed they were; *under* him was a perverse people unused to the art of war, and *before* him formidable nations to encounter. But he did not despair; the special summons given to him from heaven was sufficient to overrule all objections. He was, moreover, strengthened in his work by a promise from the lips of God himself: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so will I be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." At the same time he was directed to make the law of God his constant study, and to "meditate therein day and night." Thus being appointed to his office, and instructed and encouraged in the discharge of the duties thereof, Joshua prepared the people for their passage over Jordan. This was at a time when that river overflowed its banks, and there were no human means for their conveyance. But this was no obstacle: Joshua, strong in faith *believed*, and encouraged the people to *expect*, that God would make a way for them. He led them to its margin (the priests taking the lead, bearing the ark of the Lord); and they had no sooner arrived there, than the waters divided, and they passed over dry-shod. This miracle was, doubtless, as great an encouragement to the Israelites, as it was astounding to the inhabitants of Canaan. They, it is said, were so alarmed, that "their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel." And yet it did not prevent them from taking measures for their security against the invaders. This Joshua was aware of, and prepared himself for the contest; Canaan he knew could be possessed only by a severe conflict: nor can the Christian warrior possess the heavenly Canaan without contending with, and till he has overcome, his spiritual enemies.

Ere Joshua commenced the battles of the Lord, he circumcised all Israel, which rite had been a long time neglected; he also celebrated the Passover with great solemnity; after which, he encamped before Jericho, a

city of great strength. Here, as Joshua was surveying its fortifications, an angel appeared to him, having a drawn sword in his hand; whom Joshua addressed, supposing it was a man, demanding whether he was for Israel or their foes. The angel replied, "Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord, am I now come." At these words Joshua fell upon his face and worshipped, convinced that it was the Angel of the covenant who stood before him; he, who had delivered Israel out of Egypt, and was now come to put them in possession of Canaan. His homage was received, (a proof that the visitant was no created being,) and Joshua was commanded, as Moses had been in Horeb, to take off his shoes, because the place whereon he stood was holy.

The walled cities of Canaan had been considered by the Hebrews, great and insurmountable obstacles to the conquest of that country: but Moses had assured them, that these "cities, great and fenced up to heaven," should avail nothing before their Almighty Leader; but that he should "destroy them, and bring them down before their faces." Thus it happened at Jericho; after the army had encompassed the city seven days, the priests going on and blowing with their trumpets, the walls fell down, and the city and inhabitants were utterly destroyed; and a curse was pronounced by Joshua, in the spirit of prophecy, upon whosoever should undertake the rebuilding of it: the imprecation implied, that the man should lose all his sons in the course of the interdicted work; the eldest when he commenced, the rest during the progress of the work, and the last at its completion. This was fulfilled, five hundred years after his death, in the person of Hul, the Bethelite. Another party also was involved in this curse; this hostile city, like all the other cities of the Canaanites, was devoted to God; that is, all that was therein, was either destroyed or devoted to the sanctuary; and the people were strictly commanded not to take any part of the spoils. But Achan, a man of rank, regardless of this prohibition, took and concealed a mantle of Shinar, "two

hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight." For this deed, the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel; in consequence of which, when they attacked Ai, they met with a repulse. The cause of this disaster was revealed to Joshua, and Achan was discovered by lot to be the guilty person, who had taken the accursed thing, for which he and his family were doomed to die. This punishment may seem to exceed the crime; but when we consider that it was two-fold,—first by taking a mantle which ought to have been destroyed, and secondly, the robbery and sacrilege of gold and silver, which ought to have belonged to the sanctuary, it is no more than an act of strict justice. To this principle Joshua always strictly adhered, in all his actions; but in no instance is his regard for justice more remarkable, than in the transaction between him and the Gibeonites. That people, alarmed at the success of Israel, in order to gain Joshua's friendship, resolved upon a stratagem, whereby he might be persuaded to enter into a treaty with them. They dressed themselves in decayed garments, and put mouldy bread into old sacks, and wine in old bottles, and came to Joshua, representing themselves strangers from a far country, who had undertaken their journey to seek his friendship. Joshua and the elders of Israel believed their tale, and entered into a league with them. It was, however, soon discovered that they were neighbours, who had thus imposed upon Joshua to save their lives. At this, the Israelites were enraged, and wished Joshua to annul the treaty; but his regard for public faith was too strong thus to violate the agreement, although it had been obtained by fraud. He kept them under his protection; and when the other Canaanitish nations, displeased with them for making alliance with Israel, confederated against them, he marched against their enemies, and defeated them with great slaughter; thus evincing his regard for them as allies: nevertheless, he employed them in the service of the sanctuary, and they were regarded as servants. On the occasion of this

battle, a miracle occurred: as Joshua was pursuing their flying hosts, strong in faith, he exclaimed, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies."

There are some who object to the truth of this, on the ground of its being irreconcilable with the principles of astronomy. It is true, that the alternation of day and night is not produced by the sun's motion, but by the rotation of the earth upon its axis; so that it must have been the earth, and not the sun; which stood still. The difficulty, therefore, arises from Joshua's addressing the sun, and not the earth. But this is a customary mode of expression, not only in ancient times, when little of astronomy was known, but even now, and that among the best informed. "If any," it has been aptly observed, "If any general at the present day felt authorized, as Joshua did, to call upon the Creator of the universe to exert his almighty power in suspending the operations of those laws which his wisdom has imposed on nature, he would, most likely, express himself as Joshua did, 'Sun, stand thou still,' and not 'Earth, cease to revolve on thy axis.'" And does any one doubt, that He, who created the earth and gave it motion, could control, suspend, or alter that motion? That would be foolish, indeed! The miracle of suspending this terrestrial ball, is nothing compared with the miracle of its production. "He spake, and it was done;" a world arose from nought. It was certainly an astonishing event, and so is every manifestation of the Divine power: ourselves, and all created things around us, are wonders, which only His hand could produce. It is said, that the day was prolonged, "until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." But it was, probably, not for this purpose alone, that the Divine power was thus exerted; taking it in another light, the miracle is far more appropriate, and more impressive. The Canaanites worshipped the sun and the moon, and these, by this

miracle, were demonstrated to be unable to protect their votaries; to be the creatures of an Almighty hand, which could be rendered subservient to their ruin. But it must not be forgotten, that the Scripture account of this miracle, is not the only one on record. The Chinese annals preserve a tradition, that in the time of their Emperor Yao, whom their chronology places about the time of Joshua, the sun did not set for ten days. Changing days for hours, which may, it is thought, be an exaggeration, this statement, as nearly as possible, is coincident with the date and fact. Herodotus also relates, that he learned from Egyptian priests, that within the period of three hundred and forty-one generations the sun had set twice where he usually rises, and had risen twice where he usually sets. Ancient fables, also, seem to have a reference to this event; so do some of the allusions of the ancient poets. Thus Homer makes Agamemnon pray;—

Almighty Father, glorious above all,
Cloud-girt, who dwell'st in heaven, thy throne sublime,
Let not the sun go down, and night approach,
Till Priam's roof fall flat into the flames.

And when Jupiter promised the Trojans success till the going down of the sun, he makes Juno favour their adversaries, by causing it to set before its time.

. . . Majestic Juno sent the sun,
Unwearied minister of light, although
Reluctant, down into the ocean's stream.

Again, on the night in which Ulysses slew the suitors of Penelope, he causes Minerva to lengthen the shadows of the night, by withholding the the sun from rising.

. Minerva checked
Night's almost finished course, and held, meantime,
The golden dawn close prisoner in the deep;
Forbidding her to lead her coursers forth,
Lampas and Phaethon, that furnish light,
For all mankind.

COWPER.

It is not necessary to follow Joshua through all his various battles; it is sufficient to say, that he obeyed the Lord's command, as captain of the Lord's host, going

forth conquering and to conquer, till he had triumphed over all the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan. When this great work was accomplished, he divided the land by lot, to the different tribes, reserving no part for himself or family. This was generous conduct, nor were the people lacking in generosity; they had at length learned to be grateful. They bestowed on him Timnath-serah for his portion, at which place he rested from his warlike labours the remainder of his days.

It is stated by Procopius, that the Phœnicians, who fled before the Hebrews into Africa, where they still dwell, have erected in Numidia two pillars, on which is this inscription;—"We are the Phœnicians, who fled before the robber Joshua, the son of Nun." Nor are the Phœnicians the only people who have thus aspersed this man of God. Infidels of every age, have designated him as a ferocious marauder, devoid of justice and humanity. But if Joshua is what they represent him to be, how much more so is Titus, whose cruelty to the Jews, when their capital fell into his hands, far exceeded that of Joshua to the Canaanites: and yet Titus is an object of admiration to these very men, who traduce Joshua! Say what they will, Joshua and Titus both, were instruments in the hands of God, to punish a people whose cup of wickedness was filled up; and none can dispute, that God, as Governor of the universe, has a right to punish its inhabitants for their iniquities. The fate of the Canaanites has been the fate of other nations, whose crimes have reached unto heaven, and will be so to the end of time, that man may know "there is a God that judgeth in the earth."

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his works in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.

COWPER.

The purport of his judgment on the Canaanites, is plain: it was for their enormous crimes; it was to preserve his people from idolatry, by removing those who would

for ever have led them astray ; and it was also to impress upon their minds an abiding sense of the heinousness of their offences.

Josephus states, that the first division of Canaan among the tribes of Israel took place five years after the passage of the Jordan, and that Joshua survived this event twenty years. This space of time he spent in the bosom of tranquillity, enjoying the satisfaction of having so discharged his public duties as to gain the gratitude of Israel, and the approbation of his God ; and establishing the nation in the fear and pure worship of Jehovah. While he lived, the people were obedient and prosperous, and with the exception of a few individual idolaters, the rest remained in the true worship. How anxious Joshua was to preserve them in the right way, is manifested by the last acts of his life ; twice, in the prospect of death, he convened a general assembly to inculcate on the rulers fidelity to God, and a strict observance of his law. At the conclusion of his last address, after having besought them to weigh well what God demanded of them, and to make a right choice of religion, he added, whatever their determination might be, he and his household would serve the Lord. Deeply affected by this address, the people catching, as it were, his spirit, with one voice exclaimed, that they also would serve the Lord their God, and obey his voice. These vows were sealed by a solemn covenant, after which they departed, every man to his own inheritance, and Joshua returned to his own house. Here the hero died, at the age of one hundred and ten years, lamented by all Israel.

What Joshua was to the Hebrews of old, Jesus is to the Christian church ; he is the captain of the Lord's host ; as such, he appeared to Joshua while meditating the siege of Jericho, and as such, he now appears to the believer ; he calls him out to a warfare with the world, the flesh and the devil, those spiritual Amorites ; and engages to make him more than conqueror over them, and to lead

him safely through the Jordan of death, unto the heavenly Canaan, where foes no more may disturb his peace; under his banner therefore,

Undaunted to the field he goes;
 Yet vain were skill and valour there,
 Unless to foil his legion foes,
 The trustiest weapons were—all prayer.
 With this omnipotence he moves,
 From this the alien armies flee;
 Till more than conqueror he proves,
 Through Christ, who gives him victory.—MONTGOMERY.

SAMSON.

. Oh glorious strength,
 Put to the labour of a beast, debased
 Lower than bond slave! Promise was, that I
 Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver!
 Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
 Eyeless in Gaza, at the mill with slaves;
 Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke!—MILTON.

BORN, A. M. 2849. DIED, 2887.

ALTHOUGH the Israelites had promised Joshua that they would serve the Lord, and although they had ratified that promise by a solemn vow at the altar; but a short time elapsed after the death of that pious hero, before there was an awful declension in their state and character. The worship of God was neglected for idol worship, and there was confusion in their civil polity, “every man did that which was right in his own eyes;” but they did not transgress with impunity; they were often given over into the hand of the heathen, and they that hated them ruled over them. And yet they were not utterly forsaken; when they besought the interposition of heaven, the Lord

saved them by deliverers called Judges. These were not stated rulers, but occasional protectors, raised up to execute the purposes of heaven, either in effecting a reformation, or rescuing the nation from destruction. Such was Samson, the most remarkable character of all the Jewish heroes. *He*, while all the other judges were assisted by armies in the overthrow of their oppressors, was destined to save the nation by his single arm alone; a proof that victory belongeth unto God only, whatever be the force employed. A single arm of flesh nerved by his spirit, was more formidable to the enemies of Israel, than the force of the whole nation going out to battle against their foes without his aid.

The circumstances attending the birth of Samson are very striking. While the Israelites were groaning under the yoke of Philistia for their transgressions, one day an angel appeared to the wife of Manoah, a pious Danite, and informed her, that she, who had hitherto been childless, should have a son, who should begin to deliver Israel from their oppressors. He then charged her not to drink wine or strong drink, to consecrate the child to God, and to bring him up as a Nazarite. This circumstance she related to Manoah, who besought the Lord that the man might appear again, and give still further instructions concerning the education of the child. His prayer was heard; the angel, in the presence of Manoah and his wife, repeated his intimations, with an injunction to observe them. Thinking it was a man of like passions with themselves who addressed them, Manoah and his wife earnestly entreated him to stay till they had dressed a kid for his entertainment, but he assured them he would not eat with them, and directed them to offer it up as a burnt offering to the Lord. This Manoah did, upon a rock or large mass of stone, which occur frequently in the plains of Judea, and which are well adapted to serve as occasional altars. While it was yet burning, and the flame went upward toward heaven, the angel ascended in it, and Manoah and his wife were so terrified that they fell

on their faces, convinced they had seen an angel of God. Manoah indeed concluded that they should die, but his wife wisely reasoned, that if that had been intended, God would not have accepted their offering or have given them such information. During the next year Samson was born, and he spent his infancy at Mahane-dan, or the camp of Dan, which was situated between Zorah and Eshtaol. His parents, it appears, were very scrupulous in discharging the duties imposed upon them, and doubtless informed him of his destined work. This his youth indicated; his mind early displayed extraordinary bravery, and his body was endowed with supernatural strength; he was, we may also conclude, a pious youth.

The manner in which the bravery of Samson was called into action is most remarkable, and demonstrates the hand of an overruling Providence. When arrived at manhood, he chose for his wife a daughter of Philistia, to which choice his parents, after much remonstrance on their part and much entreaty on his, gave consent: this appeared most unfavourable to the fulfilment of the prediction, "that he should deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines;" nevertheless, the word of God was gone forth, and no untoward event could alter the decree.

One circumstance which happened about this time must not be omitted. Going one day with his parents to see his bride, he turned aside out of the way, and a young lion (not a whelp, but one arrived at its full strength and size) sprang upon him from its lair, roaring to devour him. Nothing daunted, without even so much as a staff in his hand, he grappled with the furious beast, and rent him as he would a kid, and yet he deemed the circumstance too trifling to relate to his parents, but proceeded on his journey as though nothing had happened. At this visit the damsel was betrothed to him, and when the time was elapsed between the betrothal and marriage, (probably about ten months) he returned with his parents to celebrate the nuptials, and as he was going he very naturally turned aside to see the lion he had slain, and

Behold a prodigy ! for, from within
The broken bowels and the bloated skin,
A buzzing sound of bees his ears alarms,
Straight issuing from the side assembling swarms.— DRYDEN.

He took of the honey, part of which he ate himself, and part of which he gave to his parents, still keeping the circumstance a secret. But though he kept it a secret, it led to most important results, and it was the precursor of his triumphs over the Philistines. When the marriage was celebrated, Samson was attended by thirty young men of Timnath, who entertained each other with riddles, a custom not only among the Philistines, but among the Phœnicians, the Egyptians, the Greeks, and other nations. The questions put were always difficult and obscure, and to the solution of which a reward was annexed equivalent to the forfeiture which inability incurred. Among those proposed, Samson gave one, which if they should solve in seven days, he promised to present them with thirty dresses, but if not, they were to forfeit the same number to him. This was suggested to him by the carcase of the lion, and the bees which swarmed therein; it ran thus: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Long time did these young men study to unravel the meaning of this riddle, but it was to no purpose. They therefore entreated his wife to assist them; and not finding her willing, they threatened to burn her and her father's house with fire if she did not obtain them the solution. Alarmed at their threats, by much weeping and solicitation, she gained the information for them, and on the seventh day they came to Samson, and inquired, in reply to his question, "What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion?" Feeling assured that they had gained the solution from his wife, he replied in metaphorical language, that had they not ploughed with his heifer they had not solved his riddle. He then went down to Ascalon, the chief city of one of the five principalities of the Philistines, and slew thirty of its inhabitants, and returned, and gave their

clothes to his companions. For her treachery he left his wife, and returned home with his parents.

This was the commencement of the breach between him and the Philistines, and it was widened by his father-in-law's conduct, who, supposing that Samson had deserted his wife entirely, gave her to one of his thirty companions; this Samson discovered, when, on relenting, he returned to visit her; and bent on revenge, with others that he employed, (for in the Scriptures, a person is continually represented as doing what he had directed to be done by others,) he caught three hundred foxes, and fastening them tail to tail, or in such a manner that they might run deviously and slowly side by side, and placing a fire-brand between them, he let them loose upon the Philistines' standing corn, which being ripe, was quickly consumed; so also, were their vines and their olive trees. This many have objected to; but it is very easy to suppose that such a number might be soon obtained, since they prowl about in that country in large packs by day, and conceal themselves by night in holes and corners where they may be very easily captured.

But to return to the Philistines; when they had discovered that it was Samson who had done this deed in revenge for the injuries received, they came and burned his wife and her father with fire. Thus the threat which had before frightened Samson's bride into treachery, was now executed, in consequence of the results that treachery produced. It is not easy to say what was the precise motive for this act; it might be to propitiate Samson whom they now began to dread; but if it was, it had not the desired effect. The hero, thinking he had not sufficiently availed himself of the occasion for the avenging of Israel, "smote them hip and thigh," as Scripture expresses it, "with a great slaughter;" after which he went and dwelt alone in the rock Etam, near Jerusalem. For these deeds the Philistines at length took up arms against Israel; they invaded Judah, and demanded that Samson, their destroyer, should be delivered up to them

strange to say, the Israelites, although they had such a champion among them, went up to the top of the rock and bound him for that purpose. Great was the joy of the Philistines when they received him from his ungrateful countrymen's hands; but it was soon turned into mourning. He snapped the cords wherewith he was bound, and seizing a jaw-bone which lay hard by his feet, he slew a thousand of them. When he had finished his mighty work, he cast away his weapon and called the place Ramath-lehi, "the hill of the jaw-bone." He had no sooner done this than he fainted with thirst; "but God, clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout;" and to commemorate the event, Samson "called the name thereof Enhakkore,"—"the well of him that cried."

Thus far the conduct of Samson, although he had perhaps done foolishly in marrying a daughter of Philistia, had not been criminal; we may indeed conclude that it was correct in the sight of God. But alas! Samson, though of such invincible courage, was nevertheless liable to be seduced from the paths of virtue by the allurements of vice. At Gaza, the capital of the most southern part of the Philistine principalities, he was ensnared by female artifice, and for awhile he lodged in the house of a harlot; which, but for an overruling Providence, had been his ruin. Having intelligence thereof, the Gazites set a watch at their gates to kill him when he should come forth in the morning; but, obtaining notice of their design, he arose at midnight and took the gates of their city, posts, bar and all, and carried them to the top of the hill Hebron, between twenty and thirty miles distant. This ought to have taught him to shun evil company, lest he should provoke God to leave him; but it had no such effect, for shortly after he formed an acquaintance with one Delilah, of the valley of Sorek, whom the Philistines corrupted by large bribes to seduce him into a confession of his means of strength. For awhile he suspected her treachery, and three times imposed upon her with a subterfuge; at

length, however, overcome by her constant flatteries and importunities, he revealed the secret, telling her that if his head was shorn, he should be as another man, since his state of Nazariteship would be broken and he should be deprived of the invigorating powers of the Holy Spirit. Strange indeed must have been the infatuation which beclouded the mind of Samson to have made such a confession to one, whom he must have known, had he considered one moment, would deprive him of that strength that her country might suffer no more from his powerful arm. This, the first favourable moment, was effected; while slumbering she caused him to be deprived of the seven locks of his head, an operation which the oriental barbers do with so much ease, that the most delicate sleeper would scarce be awakened. When this was completed, she awoke him with an alarm that the Philistines were near, and he arose to bestir himself in self-defence, but it was in vain, his strength was diminished, the Lord was departed from him; his exulting foes now rushed in, and apprehending him, put out his eyes, and then carried him to Gaza, and made him grind in their prison-house at their corn-mill as a slave.

Very painful must have been his reflections while in this debased condition on his past misconduct; but happily they brought repentance, and with repentance came pardon. After he had been here about a year, with the growth of his hair his strength returned; not that we are to suppose the loss of his hair in itself deprived him of that strength, only as it took from him the condition of a Nazarite, with which it pleased God to connect the extraordinary physical powers with which he was invested. If then, we find Samson again strong after the growth of his hair, we should understand that the hero, moved to repentance, renewed his vow of Nazariteship, and God saw proper to accept his vow, and to reinvest him with the powers with which he had so wantonly trifled.

Not knowing that his strength was restored, or not fearing it on account of his blindness, the Philistines

observed a solemn thanksgiving to Dagon their god, for delivering him into their hands, and Samson was called for to the temple (on the roof of which they were assembled) to amuse them, probably by exhibiting feats of strength. After being rudely insulted by his exulting foes, he desired the boy who led him, to lend him a guiding hand "a little onward" to the two middle pillars, which were the principal support of the roof, that he might lean upon them. He did so, and Samson, after uttering a short prayer, bowed himself with all his might, and pulled down the pillars, which involved the whole building in a mass of ruin, killing those that were thereon and those underneath, to the number of many thousands. He slew indeed, at his death, more than he had slain during his life. Thus died Samson after judging Israel twenty years, and living thirty-eight, and when his friends heard of his death, they came and carried away his corpse and buried it in the tomb of his fathers.

That Samson was a true believer, notwithstanding his great faults, is plain, by his being classed by the apostle Paul with those holy men of God, who obtained a good report through faith. He sinned, it is true, greatly sinned, but he sought and obtained mercy. Let us take warning by his fall, and not even cast our eyes upon the blandishments of vice; but should we in an evil hour be tempted to go astray, let us also take encouragement from his example, and seek forgiveness at the hands of a merciful God, in full assurance that he will reinstate us in his favour and make our ways perfect.

RUTH.

The manners, language, customs, all
 Familiar habits prized,
 By her, at filial duty's call,
 Were freely sacrificed ;
 E'en Moab's gods she could forsake,
 Long worshipped as her own,
 And for her lot and portion take
 Her parent's God alone.—BARTON.

Supposed to have lived about A. M. 2760.

AMONG the many instances of female excellence presented to our notice in the word of God, that of Ruth takes a prominent place. Once an idolater ; she forsook the gods of her country for the worship of the one true God ; for which great honours were conferred upon her. She became a mother of princes in Israel, and her name is immortalized in the genealogy of the Messiah.

The circumstances of her life, which occurred in the time of the Judges, are recorded in that beautiful narrative which bears her name, and which forms an entire book of the sacred canon. The precise date of the events is uncertain ; the general opinion is that they occurred in the time of Gideon ; but the only data on which an estimate may be formed is, that Ruth was the mother of Obed, the father of Jesse, David's father, and that Jesse was an old man while David was yet a youth. Of the narrative itself, it may be remarked, that it exhibits a pleasing picture of the rural manners of antiquity.

Elimelech, a person of note in Bethlehem Judah, during a famine, disposed of his patrimonial estates, and sought with his family a refuge among the idolatrous Moabites. Here he ended his days, leaving two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, to protect their aged mother ; who, when they arrived at man's estate, took wives from among the daughters of Moab, soon after which they died leaving no issue.

Thus deprived of protectors and earthly comforts, in a strange land, and hearing that the Lord had visited her people with bread, Naomi very naturally turned her thoughts towards her native home; and she resolved, fearless alike of the distance and the dangers of the way, to return thither. This resolution she disclosed to her daughters-in-law Orpah and Ruth; and here the character of the latter opens to us. Both expressed their attachment to Naomi, and their willingness to forsake their country and their friends to accompany her, which Naomi at first allowed them to do; but when they had proceeded part of the way she intreated them to return, expressing her gratitude for the kindness they had shown to herself and her offspring. Deep must have been the attachment of both these females to their mother-in-law, for we read that when she addressed them thus, they wept. But the attachment of Ruth was the most sincere; she, while Orpah kissed Naomi and departed, in the emphatic language of Scripture, "clave unto her." Still Naomi was unwilling to take Ruth from her friends and her native country to endure want in a land of strangers, she therefore urged her to follow the example of Orpah, she "is gone back unto her people," said she, "and to her gods, therefore return thou after thy sister-in-law."

The gods of Moab! What were these dumb idols and destructive demons to Ruth? The truth is, she had been instructed in the worship of the God of Israel, the fountain of life and happiness, by the family of Naomi, and was converted to their faith. On the principles of religion, therefore, her attachment to Naomi was founded, and these are ties which cannot easily be broken. The very mention of returning to the gods of Moab was sufficient to fix her in her purpose of going from them. "Entreat me not," she replied, "entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do

so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." This was a noble resolution, and it had its effect upon Naomi; she entreated her no more to return, but allowed her to proceed with her to Bethlehem Judah, whither, by the good providence of God, they safely arrived, after an absence on Naomi's part of ten years.

Doubtless, this space of time had made some alterations in the person of Naomi, but affliction had done more; her sorrows had been no common sorrows, and she had felt them deeply; they had made indeed such ravages in her countenance, that when the inhabitants of Bethlehem crowded around her, they exclaimed, "Is this Naomi?" That it was Naomi, her answer abundantly testified, for the question seemed to recall to the memory of the good woman her former prosperity, the sufferings she had endured, and to open her wounds afresh. But though she felt and mourned her losses she did not sinfully repine; her moanings were blended with pious sentiments, and she acknowledged the hand of God in her afflictions. She answered unto them, "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara, for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?"

The return of Naomi was at the time of barley harvest, a time in which we should expect man would imitate the beneficence of his maker; but it was not so with the Bethlehemites; they recognised Naomi as an old acquaintance, but they suffered her to retire to an obscure cottage, unbefriended; but her Maker was her husband, and he was about to provide for her in a bountiful manner. The law of Moses directed very liberal treatment of the poor during the ingathering of the harvest; the corners of the field were to be left unreaped; the owner was prohibited from gleaning therein, and if a sheaf was accidentally left there, it was not to be fetched away, but left for the poor. The privilege also of following the reapers while at their work to pick up the straggling ears, was conceded to them,

not as a right, but as a favour granted to persons the owner might wish to befriend. This occurred to Ruth, and she solicited Naomi's permission to glean a few ears after him in whose sight she might perchance find favour.

This circumstance is a very pleasing trait in the character of Ruth; she would not even undertake this lawful act for their mutual support, although they were reduced to such abject poverty, without the consent of Naomi. Well would it be, if all females would follow her example, and seek advice at the hand of their parents, in all their undertakings; if they did so, they might rest assured a blessing from heaven would attend them, as it did Ruth. As might be expected, Naomi gave her consent to Ruth's proposal, and she set out on her humble but honest employment, and a kind Providence directed her to that part of the field (the arable land having no enclosure in the East) which belonged to Boaz, a near relation of Elimelech, of whose servant, who was set over the reapers,

Enjoying mute the order of the field,
she obtained permission to glean.

She had not been here long before the same kind Providence that had directed her to the field of Boaz, guided his footsteps to the part where she gleaned. After the usual devout salutations of this "mighty man of wealth" and his labourers,—“The Lord be with you,” and, “The Lord bless thee,” observing among the gleaners a female whose appearance betokened that she had seen better days, he inquired of the steward who she was, and was informed that it was the Moabitish damsel that had shown such friendship for Naomi. Boaz, it appears, had heard of the circumstance, and, moved with compassion towards her, he encouraged her to glean in no other field, but to abide by his maidens, and to take of the provisions provided for those who worked in the field. Astonished at his generosity, Ruth bowed herself to the ground before him, and poured forth her gratitude for his kindness, expressing her surprise that he should take notice of her, seeing she was a stranger. Boaz assured her that he had heard of

her filial attachment to Naomi, and expressed his warmest approbation of her conduct; and to encourage her, the good man poured forth this beautiful prayer on her behalf; "The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." He then commanded the reapers to let fall some handfuls on purpose for her.

Thus was Ruth employed until the evening, at which time she returned home laden with corn, and related all that had happened to her to Naomi, who immediately saw that her sorrows were about to be turned into joy, and she exclaimed, in the fulness of her heart, "Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and the dead." The expectations of this good woman were soon realised.

There were two remarkable statutes in the Israelitish code; the one was, if the elder branch of a family sold his lands, the next of kin could redeem them, and if he was unwilling, the privilege descended to the next in succession. The other law was, if the elder brother died childless, the next of kin was in duty bound to marry her, or if he failed, the duty devolved on the next in succession, and in this latter position, Boaz stood with Naomi. With the obligation of these statutes, Naomi was well acquainted, but as she was now too aged to think of marrying, she waived her right in favour of Ruth. She directed her therefore to change her attire, and to enter the threshing-floor where Boaz reposed in the evening to obtain the advantage of the cool breezes; and Ruth went and lay crosswise at his feet, lifting up and drawing over her the extremity of his covering; thus declaring herself subject to the direction and control of Boaz, and assuming a right to his protection. When he awoke he was astonished to find a female at his feet, but discovering who she was, and hearing her claim upon him, he promised to fulfil the law, should the nearer kinsman fail in his duty. He therefore allowed her to rest under his protection till the morning, and then sent her home with a present.

According to our own usages and ideas this transaction may appear strange, and inconsistent with that simplicity of rural manners of which this book affords so pleasing a picture. Our usages, however, differ widely from those of the East. Tried by *these*, there is nothing in it which can be considered in the slightest degree improper; it was merely a process conformable to general usage, to remind Boaz of the relative position in which they stood, and to claim from him the performance of that duty which devolved upon him as kinsman of her deceased husband, which duty Boaz hastened to perform. The same day he called his relation before the elders of the city, and found him willing indeed to redeem the land, but unwilling to perform his relative duties; it therefore devolved upon him, and Boaz married Ruth. Thus was her fidelity to Naomi rewarded; she was raised from a state of abject poverty, to be the wife of the most wealthy Bethlehemite.

Very high indeed was the encomium this good and pious man passed upon Ruth: "All the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman," for the price of a virtuous woman is "far above rubies." This it was that determined Boaz in his choice; had she been otherwise, we may rest assured that his duties, however binding, had been left unfulfilled.

The marriage of Boaz and Ruth was blessed with a son, to whom the name of Obed was given, whom Naomi laid in her bosom and nursed. Yes, Naomi was still the friend of Ruth, was still united to her in the bonds of religious love, which only death could sever. In her society, partaking of her prosperity, the evening of her days was compensated for all the sorrows she had endured in the land of Moab. Ruth was indeed abundantly rewarded by the God of Israel, for whom she had renounced all things; and her dutiful conduct, her unshaken faith, and each action of her life which stands recorded in the Scriptures, is preserved as an example to her sex throughout all generations.

E L I.

PARENTAL love, what art thou, say !
 Too oft thou art a traitor—who
 Prevents man by thy gentle sway,
 From giving God his due.

By thee did good old Eli fall,
 Through thee his offspring became vile;
 He kept them not at duty's call,
 For him thou didst beguile.

This brought down judgments on his head—
 Upon his nation and his race;
 Judgments which no atonement made,
 Could afterwards efface.

For this Philistia spoiled the land,
 His impious sons fell side by side,
 The ark of God was taken—and
 The good transgressor died.

BORN, A.M. 2888. DIED, 2986.

THE Scriptures present character to us in such an endless variety, that it would be no easy task to assign to each its proper place. It is not, indeed, for man to sit in judgment upon his fellow-man; that would be arrogating to himself Heaven's high prerogative, in which he would doubtless err. By the Almighty alone are actions justly weighed, and it is for each man to take care, that when *his* are laid in the balance they may not be found wanting. He may indeed, and it is right he should, scan the good and the evil in the character of others as they appear or are recorded, that he may follow the example or take warning, and shape his course accordingly, but no further is he privileged to go. And great indeed is this privilege: had those good men of old of whom we read, been thus blest with example, many of the errors they fell into would doubtless have been avoided. In the character before us

we shall discover a mixture of good and evil; but of Eli it may be justly said, that

E'en his failings leaned to virtue's side.—GOLDSMITH.

Eli was one of the judges of Israel under their theocratical government. In him also was blended the two principal offices, civil and ecclesiastical; he was both judge and high-priest. In this latter capacity, while presiding over the service at Shiloh, he is first introduced to our notice in the Sacred History. Hannah, the mother of Samuel, was pouring out her soul before the Lord in a whispering tone, with such agitated fervour, that Eli concluded he was in a state of intoxication; it became him, therefore, as a minister of religion, to reprove her, and he addressed himself to her in terms of severe censure. But the judgment and the censure were rash; he was wounding one who was already wounded, and whose wounds he ought to have bound up by the words of consolation. Eli was, however, open to conviction; Hannah declared her integrity, and revealed her sorrows to him, and Eli retracted his rebuke, and gave her his priestly benediction. The burden of Hannah's prayer was a child, which was graciously answered; and in the gratitude of her heart she devoted the child to the service of the Lord. For this pious deed the aged priest discovered an affectionate regard for the parents; with Samuel also he was pleased, because the child delighted in the services of the sanctuary. This was certainly a mark of piety in Eli: for to love the servants of God because they delight in his ways, is an indubitable proof of love to God.

But very different was the conduct of the sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, to the conduct of Samuel: they also were admitted into the priesthood, and were employed in holy things; but "they were sons of Belial," men who knew not the Lord. In other words: while they were appointed to instruct others in the ways of God, they themselves were utter strangers to those ways. They were guilty, indeed, of the most flagrant abuses of the services of the tabernacle, and through their evil deeds,

religion was brought into contempt, and the consequence was, the ordinances were neglected, and the Israelites were confirmed in their profaneness.

And was, then, Eli acquainted with the conduct of his sons? He was, and "he restrained them not." Doubtless it caused him much grief, but it was not enough for him to mourn over their depravity: it was his duty as their parent, and as the judge and high-priest of the nation, to interpose his authority for the prevention of their crimes. We read, indeed, that he reprimanded them with great seriousness, representing the heinousness and danger of their conduct; but it was not till their abuses were made public, and the outcry against them was general, and even then his words were too gentle for the occasion. The criminals should have been brought to justice by a rigorous exertion of his authority, but through overmuch fondness they were left unpunished. This was the great blot upon the character of Eli. He neglected his parental, his priestly, and his magisterial duties to shield his offspring from punishment justly due for their offences; thus betraying a disregard for the honour of God and the interest of religion.

This, as might be expected, brought down a heavy judgment upon Eli; the crimes of Hophni and Phinehas were so flagrant, and the remissness of Eli so culpable, that the Almighty determined to vindicate his own cause, and accordingly sent his prophet with an express command to reprove him. In the address delivered to him, as from the lips of God himself, he was reminded of the favours conferred upon his family, and their ingratitude in abusing their privileges. He was charged as an accomplice in the iniquity of his sons because he had not prevented them, and was condemned for honouring them more than God, because he regarded their interests in not depriving them of office, and had suffered them to bring dishonour on his services. It was therefore decreed that they should be spoiled of their glory, that he should be a witness of the desolation of the sanctuary, and a destruc-

tion of the people and his own household; that he should be deprived of the power he possessed; that his posterity should be reduced to want, and die in the flower of their age, and that Hophni and Phinehas, whom he had spared, should perish in one day.

It is thought these judgments were suspended for some years before their execution. This might be in mercy to Eli, that he might alter his conduct and seek to amend that of his sons: but he had either lost all control over them, or he was too infirm to exert himself, or what was still more sad, continued remiss in his duties, for no amendment took place. At length God sent him another warning, and that by the child Samuel. To him God expressed his determination to execute the sentence pronounced upon Eli and his house, and no mediation should avert it; and it was alleged to be the principal cause of the coming calamities, that his sons made themselves vile, and he exercised not his authority to restrain them; thus his foolish indulgence proved his ruin, and that also of his offspring.

But while we censure the conduct of Eli in regard to his sons, we must admire the unfeigned piety some parts of his history indicates: when he heard the denunciation against himself and family from the lips of young Samuel, there was no envy *of*, or anger *at*, the instrument God had chosen to express his will; all was meek submission. He appears, indeed, to have been convinced of his guilt, and to have cast himself without hope of mercy at his feet, ready to suffer whatever he thought proper to inflict; for he replied to the prediction, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good."

The sequel is most affecting: soon after this latter denunciation there was war between the Hebrews and Philistines, and the latter were victorious. Confounded at their defeat, the elders of Israel (borrowing the unhappy idea from their idolatrous neighbours, who carried their idols with them in the wars, imagining that the efficient power of their gods was more concentrated when associated

with their images,) proposed to fetch the ark of God. This was agreed to, and Hophni and Phinehas conducted it to the field of battle. But vain were the symbols without the presence of Jehovah; they had deserted Him, and He now deserted them. They fought, and were conquered:

He delivered his ark to the enemy's hand,
His glory went down to the Philistine's land,
He gave up their hosts to the glittering sword,
His inheritance bowed to the wrath of the Lord.

While the battle was raging, Eli was sitting on a seat by the way-side, anxiously watching for a messenger, and trembling for the safety of the ark of God; at length a cry of distress was heard, and a messenger arrived, who brought the fatal news that Israel had fled before the Philistines, that there had been a great slaughter among the people, and that Hophni and Phinehas were dead. This was mournful tidings to Eli, but there was still something unrelated that caused him greater anguish,—the ark of God was taken. The Philistines in appearance had triumphed over the God of Israel, the Divine ordinances were removed, and all that was valuable lost, and that through his neglect of duty. This was more than he could bear; overcome by deep-felt anguish, he fell backward, “and his neck brake, and he died,” after having attained the age of ninety-eight years, during forty of which he judged Israel.

The example of Eli is a warning to all Christian parents, ministers and magistrates, not to do the work of the Lord deceitfully. It is indeed an evil and a bitter thing to neglect a plain duty; and no duty is plainer, than, that they should exercise that influence which they possess, for the direction and restraint of those under them, with a supreme regard to the glory of God. Scripture teems with injunctions to this effect, and if they are neglected, we may rest assured, as He visited Eli for these things, so will God visit them. It is true Eli gave evidence of piety, even at his death, and doubtless had obtained forgiveness as regards another world, but it cannot be forgotten that he died by the judgment of God, and under his heavy displeasure.

S A M U E L.

While yet a child he loved and feared the Lord,
 And served him in his temple night and day;
 And when arrived at manhood, he, his word
 Delighted to receive and to obey.

No tempting sin e'er turned his feet aside
 From duty's path; as faithful he began,
 So faithful he continued till he died,
 And gained a crown from God, and tears from man.

BORN, A. M. 2848. DIED, 2947.

BEFORE Him, in whose sight "the stars are not pure," and who chargeth "his angels with folly," it would be presumption to suppose for one moment, that any mere created being can stand a perfect creature. There are, however, some characters in Scripture so gifted with holiness, as to stand a perfect model for our imitation; and such was the character of Samuel. From childhood to old age, he was upright, meek, and devout; discharging his important duties to God and man, with diligence and fidelity. We may not, indeed, be called to such a station as he filled, but if we are influenced by such a spirit, we shall be a blessing in our place and generation.

Like Isaac, and Joseph, and Samson, Samuel was a child of prayer. Elkanah, of the tribe of Levi, had been married some years to Hannah, a woman of sincere piety, without being blessed with a child. This, as children were considered by the Hebrews, "an heritage and gift that cometh from the Lord," and the lack of children a reproach, could not but be a source of sorrow to Hannah; and this was increased by the revilings of Peninnah, the subordinate wife of Elkanah. So deeply did she feel it, that it is said, "she wept, and did not eat;" but she knew in whom her help might be found, and she poured

forth her heart to the Lord in the sanctuary at Shiloh, whither it was Elkanah's annual wont to repair with sacrifices. The length and loudness of our devotional exercises, are by no means a test of sincerity: the silent language of the contrite heart, reaches the throne of heaven, before the ostentatious prayer of the Pharisee. Thus Hannah prayed; her lips moved, and her agitated countenance betrayed the emotions of her wounded mind, but no voice was heard. This, Eli, the high-priest, observed, and rising in judgment, he reproved her in a tone of severity. "How long," said he, "wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee." Such a charge as this, some ungentle spirits would have spurned with indignation; but not so Hannah. She vindicated herself, but not in wrath; with the greatest reverence for the character and office of the high-priest, she placidly replied, "No, my lord; I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto." Wisely has Solomon observed, that, "a soft answer turneth away wrath." Eli was convinced of his rashness, and added his fervent prayer to that of Hannah, that the desire of her heart might be granted. It was so, and she gave the child the name of Samuel, which is interpreted, "asked of God."

In her petitions, Hannah had made a vow, that if the Lord would fulfil them, the child should be dedicated to his service from its infancy; nor did her natural love for Samuel make her unmindful of that vow. As soon as the child was weaned, which is supposed to be when he was about three years of age, Samuel was presented to the Lord in his tabernacle at Shiloh, and left in his employ under the direction of Eli.

The ministry of Samuel, was, doubtless, such Levitical duties as his tender years made him capable of performing; and in the discharge of these, his deportment was so

amiable, and his delight in the work of the Lord so evident, that he gained the esteem of all around him, and, above all, the favour of God. No evil example could turn him aside from the right path; for while the sons of Eli, with whom he was necessarily connected in the services of the temple, and through whom men abhorred the offering of the Lord,—while they were advancing from one impiety to another, he grew on in all virtue and knowledge, and was in favour both with the Lord and with men.

The sacred historian tells us, when Samuel was a child, that “the word of the Lord was precious there was no open vision.” When, however, he had arrived, according to Josephus, at the age of twelve years, the Lord revealed himself to him, and commanded him to deliver his judgments to Eli, who had neglected to act for the honour of God as became his office. In the silent hour of midnight, when the lights of the temple were dim, and the Levites were slumbering, a voice called Samuel by name; on hearing which, the child ran to Eli, imagining it was him who called. This was repeated three times, and Samuel could not be persuaded but that Eli did call. At length the aged priest perceived that it was more than a human voice that had called the child, and directed him to lie down, and when he heard the voice again, to reply, “Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.” Accustomed to obey, Samuel did so, and the Lord declared to him the judgments which should befall Eli and his family, because of his remissness in his duties, and his sons’ iniquities.

Admirable indeed was the modest and pious behaviour of Samuel towards his aged master on this occasion. He was in no degree elated by the honour conferred upon him, nor was he forward to relate the particulars of the message he had received; he feared, indeed to tell him, lest he should wound his feelings. But Eli was convinced that Samuel had been favoured with a Divine communication, and with a misgiving heart lest it should concern him, he called him and affectionately adjured him to

declare all that he had heard; upon which, he related the substance of his vision without prevarication; and all his words were literally accomplished shortly after;—Israel was defeated by the Philistines, the ark of God was captured, Hophni and Phinehas were slain, and Eli died a sudden death.

From that period, Samuel continued to receive communications from heaven, and was considered by the whole nation to be a prophet of the Lord. The revelations he received, with much zeal he delivered to the people; but it was a time of great degeneracy, and many years passed away before any reformation appeared. At length, however, a glorious dawn arose; his labours were rewarded with a general revival; all the house of Israel longed again for the worship of the Lord, and resolved upon serving him. To confirm them in their good resolution, Samuel convened a general assembly at Mizpeh, for the purpose of entering into an express engagement to serve the Lord, and to seek his blessing by sacrifice, fasting, and prayer. At this meeting idolatry was renounced, the worship of Jehovah was restored, and Samuel was acknowledged the Judge of Israel.

While engaged in their religious transactions, the Israelites were attacked by their inveterate and most powerful foes, the Philistines. Filled with terror, they urged the prophet to intercede for them, which he did, and deliverance was vouchsafed, in a way which could not fail of convincing them, that it was the hand of God; a dreadful storm of thunder so terrified their enemies, that they fled before it, and became an easy prey to the Israelites. The memory of this victory was preserved by a monument which Samuel erected, and to which he gave the significant name of Eben-ezer, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

Under the government of Samuel, Israel was happy and prosperous. No foe dared to invade their country, and all the power he possessed, he employed for their best interests. As a judge, he conducted their civil

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with the utmost diligence, taking regular circuits through the land to execute justice and maintain good order; and as a priest, at Ramah his residence, he built an altar, at which, though Shiloh was deserted, the public ordinances were celebrated, in which the people were called upon to join.

Thus diligently and faithfully was Samuel employed, serving God and man, till old age rendered his annual circuit burdensome, at which time he associated his two sons with him in the government, making them judges. But in this, he seems to have consulted his own inclination, rather than the will of God. The office they filled, required talents and principles equal to his own; and such talents they might possess, but they were deficient in principle. They polluted the clear streams of justice by bribery and extortion, and so flagrant was their conduct, that the elders of Israel resolved to change their form of government; and they accordingly waited on the aged prophet, and representing their evil ways, desired him to make them a king, that they might resemble other nations.

Doubtless, the Israelites had cause for complaint, and yet, probably, their request arose partly from ambition. At all events, it discovered great ingratitude towards Samuel, under whose government they had enjoyed so many blessings, and as such, Samuel seems to have taken it; but instead of reproaching them, he went and made known his griefs unto God, and sought his direction; at whose command he acceded to their wishes, and anointed Saul king over Israel. This he did with a cheerful submission, not regarding the honour and interests of his own family. He had, doubtless, profited by the example of Eli, and therefore he sheltered not his sons from the public disapprobation, but without hesitation deprived them of their offices, laid down his own as judge, and exalted a stranger to the throne. But this was not all: he entertained the man to whom he was about to resign his authority, instructed him in the discharge of his duties,

poured the oil of consecration upon his head, and kissed him in token of love and fealty. The declaration he made to the people on resigning his judicial authority was truly noble: "Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and gray-headed, and behold, my sons are with you, and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed; whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you." This was not the language of ostentation, but of conscious integrity, and the people was compelled to acknowledge it as such. "Thou hast not defrauded us," they replied, "nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand."

But Samuel made not this appeal for the vindication of his character alone; it was that he might ground upon it his accusation against them, for having cast off the government of God through an ambitious spirit. This he did in very emphatic language; and to show that he was speaking as the minister of Jehovah, at his call, a tremendous storm of thunder and rain came on: an extraordinary occurrence at that season, being the time of wheat harvest. This brought conviction to their minds, and they acknowledged themselves guilty of a great offence. Such was Samuel's aim; he desired to bring them to repentance, that they might more carefully attend to his exhortations; he exhorted them therefore to obey the law of God, and encouraged them to do so with the promise of God's support and protection so long as they should act upon that principle. He concluded his address by expressing his regard for them, and his firm resolve of attending to their welfare so long as he lived; after which he retired from his station as a judge, retaining only the priestly authority.

But although Samuel had resigned the civil power into the hands of Saul, the minister of religion will appear in the sequel superior to the monarch. Often was he called upon to denounce the judgments of heaven upon him for his offences; on one occasion indeed, when Saul, in opposition to the command of God, spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites, Samuel assumed the regal power; he severely reprehended him for his disobedience, and executed the injunctions Saul had neglected, and from that time Samuel visited him no more. Nevertheless, he mourned over the fallen monarch as over his first-born; and when he was commanded to anoint David, the son of Jesse, king over Israel, in the room of Saul, he showed his regard for him by his reluctance to obey the injunction; he had also a fear lest this rebellious monarch should take away his life; but his objections were overruled, and he went to Bethlehem, and did as he was commanded. He anointed David, who was pointed out to him as the chosen among many brethren to fill the royal seat.

Samuel was now far advanced in years, but he was employed to the last moment of his life in advancing the interests of religion; he instituted the schools of the prophets, which were designed to maintain a succession of proper persons to instruct the people. This was the commencement of that institution, which is spoken of as lasting from the time of Samuel till the time of the prophet Malachi, and out of which, with few exceptions, God chose his most eminent prophets. Over these schools Samuel himself presided; for, when David fled from the rage of Saul, he took refuge with this aged saint, at Naioth, in Ramah, of whom it is said, that he was standing as appointed over the company of prophets.

At this place it is supposed Samuel died, at the age of ninety-nine years, after a life of eminent usefulness. This was a mournful event to the Israelites; they all "gathered together and lamented him," and no wonder, for each action of his life betokened a regard for the public good. In him they lost a common father, by whose

means they had been raised from a most abject condition; in civil and religious polity, to an honourable station in both; it became them, therefore, to embalm his memory with tears. And what greater reward can man bestow on man for his past services? Could Samuel have beheld them as they wept over him, doubtless he had exclaimed, "My reward is sufficient;" and yet he has a greater reward bestowed upon him by the God he served: "a crown of glory that fadeth not away." And if we imitate his example, his early piety and unreserved obedience to the Divine commands, such honours will attend us: the world will weep over our graves the tear of parting sorrow,

And God will reward us through the Son of his love
With honours immortal, in the regions above.

There is one circumstance recorded by the sacred historian concerning Samuel which has given occasion to much discussion. After he had been dead two years, the Philistines invaded Israel, and Saul, deserted of God, had recourse to a woman who pretended to the spirit of divination, and who included in that pretension, the power of calling on the dead to appear to those who desired their presence. He desired her to raise Samuel, and the enchantress accordingly exerted her magical art for that purpose, and she asserted that she saw the form of an old man covered with a mantle arise from the earth. Saul believed her assertion, and feeling convinced that the apparition was that of Samuel, he bowed himself to the earth, and a voice addressed him, which, after ascertaining why he was called from the dead, uttered a prediction that his kingdom should be rent from his hands, and given to David, and that on the morrow, Israel and himself should be slain by the Philistines.

The discussion mentioned, turns chiefly upon these points: whether the appearance of the prophet was real, or an imposition on Saul's credulity; and if real, by what power it was produced. Many believe that the Witch of Endor was merely a cunning woman, who, acquainted with the state of public affairs, and guessing the tall

stranger to be the king of Israel, and having some knowledge of the person of Samuel, undertook the task of deceiving Saul, with an associate who personated the appearance and imitated the voice of the deceased prophet. There are, again, those who conclude that it was a demon whose aid she invoked on this occasion. But there are others whose opinion is entitled to more regard than the foregoing; these think, as the text certainly indicates, and as Josephus describes, that the appearance was real, but they wisely deny that the power of the woman or the devil had any share in its production, and conclude, that the prophet appeared by the Lord's permission, "to make Saul's crime the instrument of his punishment, in the dreadful denunciation of his approaching doom,—to show to the heathen world the infinite superiority of the oracle of the Lord inspiring his prophet, over the powers of darkness, and the delusive prognostics of their wretched votaries in their false oracles—and to confirm the belief of a future state by 'one who rose from the dead,' even under the Mosaical dispensation."

DAVID.

See Judah's promised king, bereft of all ;
 Driven out an exile from the face of Saul.
 To distant caves the lonely wanderer flies,
 To seek that peace a tyrant's frown denies.
 Hear the sweet accents of his tuneful voice ;
 Hear him o'erwhelmed with sorrows, yet rejoice :
 No womanish or wailing grief has part,
 No, not a moment, in his royal heart ;
 'Tis manly music, such as martyrs make,
 Suffering with gladness for a Saviour's sake !
 His soul exults ; hope animates his lays ;
 The sense of mercy kindles into praise ;
 And wilds, familiar with the lion's roar,
 Ring with ecstatic sounds unheard before.—COWPER.

BORN, A. M. 2919. DIED, 2988.

THE writers of profane history have, in all ages, been at great pains to celebrate the excellencies, and to conceal or extenuate the faults, of their favourite characters, but not so the sacred historians ; *they*, under the direction of the Spirit of truth, relate facts as they happened, and delineate characters as they were. If there was any foul blot in the lives of their most exalted subjects, there it stands recorded in lines as legible as their brightest virtues ; an indubitable proof of the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures, and of the genuineness of our most holy religion. In no history recorded in the Bible is this truth-telling simplicity more conspicuous than in the life of the eminent man before us. David, "the man after God's own heart," and, "the sweet singer of Israel," was the youngest son of Jesse, the grandson of Boaz and Ruth. The days of his youth were spent in the rural occupation of a shepherd ; an employment which afforded him much leisure, and which was well improved by him ; here he meditated upon the wonders of creation, and here he ~~composed~~ the high praises of his God to his well-tuned b

new and heaven-taught lays; lays which no less exalted tone of minstrelsy could equal, and which have been, are now, and ever will be, an invaluable blessing to all mankind. Thus was David occupied when Samuel, under pretence of sacrifice, came to Bethlehem, by the Divine command, to anoint one of the sons of Jesse king over Israel in Saul's stead. After his seven warlike brethren, had passed before the prophet and were rejected, Samuel inquired whether there was not yet another son; and being informed that the youngest was with the sheep, he sent for him, and when the youth appeared, he took the horn of oil and poured it upon his head in the presence of all his brethren.

The shepherd with his crook, in the sight of man appears a very unlikely person to grasp the sceptre; but God seeth not as man seeth, nor worketh as man worketh. He had called David to the office, and it was his to perfect what he had begun by fitting him for his task, and opening the way for his exaltation, which he did in a most wonderful manner. From the time the oil descended upon his head, though he returned to his rural occupation, the spirit of God began to qualify him for his future office, while it departed from Saul; and events occurred which brought David into a more likely position for ascending the throne, and which finally led to that consummation. Saul fell into a desponding state, and his servants advised him to seek for a skilful player on the harp, if haply his troubled mind might be diverted by the soothing power of music. In this advice the monarch acquiesced, and David, who was renowned for his skill, was brought before him, and he quickly won the monarch's affections, and he made him his armour-bearer. Some minds unused to the world, would have been corrupted by the gaities of a palace and the favours of a monarch; but not so was the mind of David; his piety was deep-rooted in the heart. After the distress of the king had been alleviated by the power of his music, we behold him returning contentedly to his former pastoral employment of

the plains of Bethlehem, where the night and the day witnessed the fervour of his devotions. But David did not long continue in retirement: the Philistines invaded Israel, and Saul collected his forces and marched against them. The two armies encamped over against each other on the sides of opposite hills; and while they thus lay, each fearing to come to a general engagement, a Philistine of extraordinary stature, Goliath by name, marched out, morning and evening, for forty days, into the plain that divided their forces; demanding a champion to combat with, on the condition that the nation to whom the vanquished belonged should become tributary to that of the victor; a practice of continual recurrence in the history and poems of ancient times, and which still exists among the Bedouin Arabs. The appearance of this mighty warrior filled all Israel with consternation. Not one dared to venture his arm against that of the giant, though Saul promised riches and honours, and even his own daughter, to the man who should slay him. At length David was sent by his father to the camp with provisions for his brethren, and it so happened that Goliath came forth as he was wont on his errand of defiance, and in his hearing insulted both Israel and their God. At this the zeal of David was enkindled, and he expressed his willingness to meet the daring foe, and was brought before Saul to obtain his approbation. The monarch at first rejected his offer as ridiculous, telling him he was but a youth, and that the Philistine was a man of war from his youth. This was true, and to all human appearance was a reasonable objection to the proffered service of David: but the stripling knew in whom he trusted. He therefore, in order to remove the monarch's objection, with beautiful simplicity related the circumstance of his having slain a lion and a bear, which at two different times had taken a lamb out of the flock; and he added, "Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God." This

convinced Saul that the youth might be trusted, and he gave his consent: he moreover caused his own armour to be put upon the youthful hero, and girded him with his sword. With these David assayed to go, but not having been accustomed to the cumbrous load, he put them off,

Resolving to trust in Jehovah alone,
And to meet his proud foe with a sling and a stone.

Thus equipped he stood before the giant, as he drew near for the last time in all the pride of strength and the pomp of war, to give his haughty challenge. The Philistine warrior, remarking the extreme youth and the fair appearance of Israel's champion, disdained him; and supposing him a foe too contemptible for contest, asked with a sneer, whether he imagined he was a dog, that he should come forth to meet him thus. Then waxing wroth, and cursing him by his gods, he bade him approach, and he would give him to the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the earth. Nothing daunted by the fierce threats or with the fiercer appearance of his antagonist, David boldly replied: "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." Then after assuring him that the Lord would deliver him into his hand, —that the whole host of the Philistines should fall, and that the assembled multitude should know that victory rested not in sword or spear, but in the Lord; he took a stone from his scrip and slang it, smiting him in his forehead through the opening of his helmet, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell with his face to the earth. Struck with dread at seeing their champion fall, the Philistines fled, and Israel pursued after them to the very gates of Ekron, and thousands were slain.

When David had laid the mighty foe prostrate, he took the giant's own sword and cut off his head; and with this in his hands, when the victory was over, he was brought before Saul. The king, who it appears had forgotten his

musician, probably from the nature of his disease, inquired who he was; and he modestly replied: "I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite." From that day Saul took him, and would let him go no more home to his father's house; on this day also the friendship of David and Jonathan, the son of Saul, so celebrated for its enduring bonds, commenced. In token of his sincerity, Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him, with his sword and his girdle, and gave it to the hero, a mark of favour considered in the East to be the very height of honour, since it was also a mark of attachment.

Thus far David was prosperous, and his life promised to be a happy one; but the most painful afflictions awaited him, and his honours were to become imbittered to him. As the troops returned from the successful campaign, they were welcomed home by the women, who came "out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music." In the chorus of their triumphal songs they answered one another as they played, and said, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," on hearing which the soul of the jealous monarch conceived a mortal hatred against him; he was grieved that the people should testify their gratitude thus loudly to his disparagement, and his rage and vexation so wrought upon his mind, that it produced a renewal of his former despondency, and David again exercised his skill in music to free him from his malady. But in this he was now unsuccessful; the monarch's hatred of the musician made him regardless of his minstrelsy; twice as he swept the chords impetuous from side to side, in hopes of cheering his soul, the infuriated monarch, in all the rage of madness, sought to slay him, by casting a javelin at him. Each time, however, he escaped, and withdrew from Saul's presence.

After this David was removed from court to a situation in the army, in which post, by a diligent and faithful dis-

charge of his duties, he gained the affections of the whole nation. But the more popular David became, the more bitter was the enmity of Saul against him. He did not indeed at this time adopt measures of open violence to rid him of his rival, (as he evidently considered him) but his designs were more atrocious. Under the mask of friendship, with a promise of his elder daughter in marriage if he should prove victorious, David was sent to fight against the Philistines, that he might perish by their hands; but the Almighty covered his head in the day of battle, and he returned victorious. Instead, however, of meeting with the promised reward, he was treated with contempt, and the princess was given to another.

On being told that his youngest daughter, Michal, loved David, a second offer of the same kind was made to him by Saul, who now openly expressed his pleasure at the opportunity afforded him of probable revenge. "I will give him her," said he, "that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." Saul wished that he might fall in the engagement, but he was again disappointed; David was again victorious, and he now received the reward of his valour.

One would have imagined that now David had become his son-in-law, the rage of the king would have been softened down; but it was far otherwise; he commanded his servants to slay him secretly, and what was still more diabolical, charged Jonathan to assassinate his friend. The prince or the servants would not however obey the mandate; Jonathan, indeed, pleaded David's cause with the monarch, and he pleaded it in language so eloquent and energetic that he effected a temporary reconciliation between them; Saul swore that he should not be slain, and he was restored to his office at court. But although the storm was blown over, it was only to return with redoubled violence; a new war breaking out with the Philistines, David gained fresh laurels by vanquishing them, and this, instead of endearing him to Saul, only served to raise the latent sparks of his envious rage. The javelin again quivered in

the wall, and David again narrowly escaped death at his hands, and he fled to his house. But there was now no safety for him in the dominions of Judah; the rage of Saul pursued him thither, and he escaped only through his wife's subtilty.

Very painful were the trials that David had now to undergo. He became an exile from court, his house, his wife, his beloved friend, in a word, from all that was precious to him; scarce knowing at times where to lay his head, or where to obtain sustenance. At first he imagined he should be safe with Samuel, and he therefore went to Naioth, or the meadows of Ramah, and sought the protection of that man of God. This Samuel willingly granted, but Saul had become so apostate, that he disregarded the sacred duties of religion, and his fury pursued him thither also. Many messengers were sent to apprehend him, but as oft as they came, they mingled with the prophets of the school over which Samuel presided, and prophesied, forgetting their errand. Hearing this, Saul himself, bent on revenge, came to seek him, and he was affected in the same manner; he prophesied and lay down before Samuel all night, powerless to do harm. This miraculous interposition of Divine Providence afforded David an opportunity of escape, and he fled to his beloved Jonathan, to consult with him upon the proper means of safety. Their interview was very affecting; they bound themselves by solemn covenant to maintain an unshaken fidelity towards each other, and Jonathan undertook to plead his cause again with Saul his father; but he had now well nigh lost his life in pleading for that of his friend. At the very name of David the monarch was so enraged, that he used the most opprobrious language to his son, and aimed a javelin at him. Grieved at this, the generous prince arose from table and went in quest of David. The two friends met, and after much weeping, and having again sworn fidelity and kissed each other, they parted in sorrow, Jonathan returning to the city, and David going he knew not whither.

The trials of David were now so great, that notwithstanding his general faith in God, he was betrayed into some inconsistencies. In his flight he stopped at the tabernacle, where he obtained from Ahimelech, the high-priest, a portion of holy bread for his sustenance. This was lawful in itself, but it was gained by dissimulation; in order to avoid suspicion, he pretended that he was sent out hastily on the king's business; and this misconduct caused the death of many, and was afterwards a source of bitter grief to himself. Besides the bread, David also received from Ahimelech the sword of Goliath, which had been laid up in a cloth after the manner of the East; and with this slender sustenance, and thus armed, intent only upon his security, he fled to the country of the very enemies he had so often subdued. The Philistine king was inclined to favour him, but not so were his courtiers; they were so much prejudiced against him, that, forgetting the watchful care of his Heavenly Father, he resorted to feigned madness as a means of escaping their resentment, which device succeeded, and he was sent away as a troublesome person.

Banished from Gath, David removed to the cave of Adullam, in the plain south-west of Jerusalem. Here he was joined by his parents and relations, and here also about four hundred disaffected persons came to him, and made him their captain: not that he intended to war against Saul, or to injure others; his conduct was far otherwise; his acceptance of their services was only in self-defence, and to protect others, as all his actions proved. Among those that came to him, David was favoured with the company of the prophet Gad. This was, doubtless, a great comfort to him; he seemed, indeed, to have been his counsellor, for it was by his advice he removed into the land of Judah, first placing his aged parents under the protection of the king of Moab. This was a step pregnant with danger, but the advice was probably given in order to preserve David from the idolatry of strange nations who were inclined towards him.

Soon after David had entered Judah he was joined by Abiathar, the son of his benefactor Ahimelech, who related to him the murder of his father and the whole of the ministers of the tabernacle, save himself, for the hospitality he had received at their hands. These were painful tidings to David: he considered himself the cause of their death, and lamenting his dissimulation, took Abiathar into his friendship, pledging his own life for his security.

While the exile was endeavouring to elude the vigilance of Saul, news was brought to him that the Philistines had invaded Keilah. As he was wont, he consulted the Divine counsel whether he should go to their relief, and the answer he received was to that effect. He accordingly went, and by his generous interference saved its inhabitants; and yet these very men, whose lives he had rescued at the risk of his own, agreed to deliver him up into the hands of Saul. Their base designs were, however, frustrated by the tender care of an overruling Providence; David was timely warned of his danger, and hastened into the wilderness, where he wandered among woods and mountains in daily fear of his adversary who was pursuing him. It was while in this distressing situation, Jonathan his faithful and attached friend came to him, and in the language of Holy Writ, "strengthened his hands in God." In his ears David poured out his complaints, and Jonathan administered to his wounded soul the balm of comfort drawn from the sacred source of truth. He reminded him of the Divine promises, and encouraged him to look forward to a glorious issue. Noble indeed must the conduct of this prince appear, when we remember that the promises he repeated to support his friend, cut off all his own hopes of succeeding to the throne of Israel.

After this event, and in the same place, David was brought into a greater straight than he had hitherto experienced. The officious Ziphites discovered his retreat to Saul, and so secretly was their information given, that Saul surrounded him with his army. Escape appeared impos-

sible, but it has been well said, "man's extremity is God's opportunity," for by his care David was again delivered. Tidings were brought to Saul that the Philistines invaded the country, and he was obliged to return; but no sooner had he repulsed the enemy, than he resumed his pursuit of David, by which he afforded him an opportunity of manifesting his innocence and the integrity of his heart.

The wanderer had retired for security to the rocks and wilderness of Engedi; whither Saul also came, and entered into a cave where David and his men lay concealed. The followers of David immediately urged upon him that it was a providential opportunity of taking vengeance on his persecutor. But no; David shuddered at the idea of putting forth his hand against the Lord's anointed; he simply cut off a part of his adversary's robe as a token of what he might have done, had he not been restrained by a sense of duty; and even this trivial circumstance gave him pain, lest it should be thought an act of irreverence and disaffection. As Saul was departing, David called after him, and with all the tokens of respect expostulated with him on his conduct, exhibiting the skirt of his robe as a proof that he had had full power over him; and he further reminded him that the Lord would shortly interpose and decide the contest. This address, and the sense of the danger from which he had escaped, deeply affected Saul; he was melted into tears, and he acknowledged that David had returned good for evil, and expressed his belief that he would reign as king over Israel; he also supplicated him to spare his posterity when the event should happen, which request was granted, and they parted in peace.

But David uttered the language of experience when he gave this advice: "Put not your trust in princes." Although Saul ought now to have been bound by the strongest ties of gratitude to pursue him no further, yet he could not trust the capricious temper of that monarch, but still continued a wanderer. He retired to the wilderness of Paran, where he felt the pangs of want, and in his

exigency, had recourse to one Nabal, to whom he had rendered some service in protecting his flocks and possessions from the ravages of robbers. His appeal was unattended to; the proud rustic refused his assistance, and heaped insult upon the head of David, at which his anger was kindled, and he resolved to extirpate his whole family from the face of the earth. Abigail, however, the wife of Nabal, wisely diverted him from his fatal purpose, by meeting him with a present, and by making excuses for the conduct of her lord. Thus was David preserved from a great crime; as it *was*, his anger was considered sinful, but who can say that they should not have felt as he felt, had they been placed in the same trying situation? Human nature will sometimes be seen in the actions of the most eminent servants of God. Shortly after this Nabal died, and David, after the days of mourning were ended, took Abigail to wife.

David had just reason for suspecting the treachery of Saul: no bonds were sufficient to restrain his hands; he had experienced the forbearance of the man whom he had persecuted, and for a moment felt remorse at his conduct. But this was soon forgotten, and he pursued him with the same murderous intentions as before. This afforded David an opportunity of again exercising his forbearance; Saul came near the spot where he had retreated, and with his host lay asleep on the ground; this was an inviting occurrence; David stood by the sleeping monarch, and Abishai advised him to avenge himself; but he again nobly resisted, and only took the spear and the cruse of water which were at the monarch's head, with which he retired, and from a safe distance cried unto Abner, Saul's general, and reproached him for his neglect of his master. He then expostulated with Saul in the most tender and affectionate manner on his injurious conduct, and warned him of the consequences. This fresh instance of generosity confounded Saul; he again acknowledged his guilt, and invited David to return with him, promising that he would no more meditate evil against him. The propo-

was, however, declined, and they parted to meet no more on earth.

Having now to remain in Judah, David again sought refuge in Philistia, and Achish, the king, showed him favour. He gave him the city of Ziklag, and so well pleased was he with David during his residence there, that he resolved to take him on an expedition with him against Israel. What the conduct of David might have been on the occasion, we can only conjecture; he must either have fought against his own country, or have proved treacherous to those with whom he had so rashly joined himself. This was, doubtless, a perplexing difficulty to David; but God extricated him from his embarrassment, and saved him from crime. The lords of the Philistines were averse to his services, suspecting his integrity, and they compelled Achish to dismiss him, which he did with reluctance, and with high commendations of his character.

On his return to Ziklag, he found that the Amalekites had set it on fire, and had carried off the wealth of the city, with the wives and children of his followers; on seeing which, his men vented their reproaches against him, and formed a design of putting him to death, deeming him the cause of their disaster, in having made previous incursions among that people in accordance with the Divine will, which had doomed them to destruction. This misfortune in itself was great, but their reproaches made it still greater. But David murmured not; he encouraged himself in the Lord his God, and after seeking and obtaining the Divine direction, he pursued, overtook, and conquered the marauders, recovering all the spoils and all the prisoners.

We now arrive at one of the most important eras in the life of David. While he had been thus employed, the Philistines and Hebrews had met at Gilboa, and the latter were defeated, and Saul and his sons were slain. This was an event in which we might suppose he would rejoice; but it was not so. When the tidings were brought to him he rent his clothes, and mourned, and wept, and

fasted, and revenged his death upon the Amalekite who boasted of having put forth his hand against the Lord's anointed. His whole deportment manifested his reverence for Saul, and his attachment to that monarch during life; and he has handed down to posterity his talents and achievements in a most beautiful and pathetic elegy. His distress was doubtless increased by the death of his long-tried friend Jonathan, for the piece commences and ends with a tribute to his memory; but this to an ambitious mind would have been a matter of rejoicing rather than of sorrow, inasmuch as that prince might have proved a formidable rival, being heir to the throne, and a favourite with the people.

One of the most beautiful traits in the character of David is his freedom from ambition. Although he had received the Divine commission to fill the regal office, and although numbers flocked to him at Ziklag in the expectation of his doing so immediately, he hasted not to be great. Before he took any step he inquired of God whether he should remove into the land of Judah, and by express revelation, he removed thither, and fixed his residence at Hebron, where he commenced his glorious reign in the thirtieth year of his age. Thus did all the endeavours of Saul to prevent the son of Jesse from ascending the throne prove abortive. His schemes all ended in confusion; while he lay low in the dust, the persecuted David was crowned with glory.

With what spirit David ascended the throne, his Psalms will testify; in them he breathed forth his gratitude, and called on all to unite with him in admiring the wonderful dispensation which had led to that consummation. His first public action also speaks much for his wisdom. It was an act well calculated to conciliate the affections of his people, and to show his freedom from ambition, envy, and revenge. The men of Jabesh-Gilead had rescued the bodies of Saul and his sons from the hands of the Philistines, and interred them with the greatest solemnity. For this deed, David, instead of censuring them, as many

in his situation would have done, commended them, and promised to recompense them for their loyalty. But the most disinterested conduct often fails in preventing opposition, and such was the case with David; though exalted to the throne of Judah, he was not yet to enjoy it with tranquillity; civil war with all its horrors was to attend his steps. The tribes of Israel, at the instigation of Abner, chose Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, for their king, and for a long time Israel and Judah contested for the mastery; but the counsels of heaven were immutable, and the son of Jesse "waxed stronger and stronger," while the house of Saul "waxed weaker and weaker." At length the leaders of the faction, Ishbosheth and Abner, quarrelled, and the latter entered into a negotiation with David at Hebron to put him in the complete possession of the royal power. The scheme was ripe for execution when it was set aside by a circumstance painfully afflicting to David; Joab and Abiathar treacherously slew Abner while holding a conference with him. This perfidy deserved the most rigorous punishment; but David, it appears, had not yet sufficient power to inflict it upon them, for we find him, while mourning over the death of Abner, complaining, "I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me."

But though the designs of Abner were frustrated by this treachery, the event was soon after brought about; Ishbosheth was murdered in his bed by his servants, who carried his head to David, in hopes of meeting his approbation, and of obtaining a reward for their deed. David, however, sought not power by treachery, the atrocious act filled him with indignation, and, as a righteous judge, he commanded them to be put to death. The tribes of Israel had now lost their leader, and they came to the unanimous resolution of entreating David to take upon him the whole government; in which he acquiesced, and he was solemnly crowned at Hebron, seven years and a half after the death of Saul, and about fifteen after his first consecration by the hand of Samuel.

The same power which raised David to the throne supported him in it, and established his kingdom. In his strength he dispossessed the ancient inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem, and made it the seat of government. The poet Tasso gives a beautiful description of this city, famous alike in sacred and profane history:—

Jerusalem is seated on two hills,
Of height unlike, and turned side to side ;
The space between a gentle valley fills,
From mount to mount expanded far and wide.
Three sides are sure inclosed with crags and hills,
The rest is easy scant to rise espied ;
But mighty bulwarks fence that plainer part,
So art helps nature, nature strengthens art.

The town is stored of troughs, and cisterns made
To keep fresh water, but the country seems
Devoid of grass, unfit for ploughman's trade ;
Not fertile, moist with rivers, wells, and streams ;
There grow few trees to make the summer's shade,
To shield the parched land from scorching beams ;
Save that a wood stands six miles from the town,
With aged cedars dark and shadows brown.

By East, among the dusky valleys glide
The silver streams of Jordan's crystal flood ;
By West, the midland sea with bounders tied
Of sandy shores, where Joppa whilom stood ;
By North, Samaria stands, and on that side
The golden calf was reared in Bethel wood :
Bethlehem by South, where Christ incarnate was,
A pearl in steel, a diamond set in brass.

But no description of Jerusalem can equal the animated terms in which David speaks of this "city of the great King;" it is a subject on which he delighted to descant, and many of the most beautiful figures in his Psalms are drawn from that source; more especially that part of it called the Hill of Zion. In this part he erected a palace for the royal residence, and in this part he speaks of God himself whose throne is heaven, and whose footstool, earth, as having a desire to inhabit.

It was not long before the Philistines, who had heard of David's advancement to the throne, commenced a war

against him, over which foes he obtained two complete victories, after which he had rest from all his enemies round about. But he did not set himself down in ignoble ease; no, his leisure was employed in the promotion of the glory of God and the best interests of man. The ark of God had been long neglected, and he seized the first opportunity of putting an honour upon it; he prepared to fetch it by solemn procession from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem, in order that the ordinances of religion might be celebrated near him. David, and all the chosen men of his army, attended on this occasion, all showing the liveliest demonstrations of pious joy. But a sudden damp was cast over their spirits; the symbol of the Divine presence was not carried by the Levites according to the order prescribed, but was placed upon a cart, from which it was in danger of falling. This, a man of the name of Uzzah observing, he put forth his hand to support it, and for so doing was struck dead, and David, afraid to carry it farther, placed it in the house of Obededom. This awful event was, doubtless, designed to impress both the king and his people with a sense of the holiness and justice of God, and to convince them that all his commands must be complied with to the very letter. The ark continued in the house of Obededom three months, and his pious care of the sacred deposit brought down upon his head the blessings of heaven. At the end of that time, David resumed his design, and with great pomp and rejoicing, the Levites conveyed it to Jerusalem; the king and all his people singing, with loud acclamations, some beautiful psalms composed by himself for the occasion. His joy this day seems to have been unbounded, and all partook of his holy pleasures; with one heart and voice they paid with him their adorations to Jehovah, as they fixed the ark in its destined place. Nor was David satisfied with bringing the ark to Jerusalem, or with the solemnities of the day; he regulated the services for the future, and excited the people to a regular attendance at the place of worship, in which he himself so delighted. But neither

did his piety rest here; he carried it with him into the bosom of his family, and into the secrecy of the closet. He returned "to bless his house;" or, in other words, to discharge his family duties, by instructing them, and joining with them in the solemn sacrifice of prayer and praise, and to hold private communion with his God: very many of his psalms are the fruits of his hours of retirement, and they plainly show how much he valued secret devotion.

So ardent was the zeal of David for the glory of God, that he designed the building of a temple, in which all the religious rites of the true worship might be administered. The design at first met with the approbation of the prophet Nathan, but it was forbidden by the Lord, because he was called to other services; he received, however, a promise that his son should carry it into effect; moreover he received a declaration that his throne should be established for ever,—an evident allusion to the Messiah, "of whose kingdom," it is said, "there shall be no end." With pleasing submission David acquiesced in the Divine will, and poured out his soul in strains of thanksgiving for such exalted favours.

Fervent piety has been considered incompatible with the duties of a soldier, but we see them blended in David; his pious disposition diminished not his courage; he could conduct the religious services of the people and direct the movement of a numerous army. The Philistines, the Moabites, the Syrians, the Edomites, the Ammonites, and the Amalekites, each in their turn were subdued by his prowess, some of whom he made desolate, and others tributary. This brought immense riches into the treasury, and spread his fame far and wide; but all the riches he obtained he dedicated to the Lord, and all his victories he ascribed to his name. Nor was David unfitted by his piety to hold the reins of government; on the contrary, it enabled him to do his duty. Urged by this principle, he *himself* executed judgment and justice equally to all his people; none cried unto him in vain for

redress. His government was indeed a type of the spiritual government of the Messiah.

Thus far the character of David shines with peculiar lustre: would that all his future actions were as pure as those recorded; but alas! in an evil hour he fell from the height of his integrity into the lowest depths of iniquity. Having established his throne in security, he seems to have given way to self-indulgence. His army was gone out to battle with the Ammonites, while he tarried at home at his ease; and one evening, as he arose from the bed whereon he had reposed during the heat of the day, to enjoy the cool breeze upon the top of his house, he espied Bathsheba, a beautiful woman, bathing herself, and lust was enkindled in his heart; nor could the fact of her being another man's wife, and one who was endangering his life in the service of his country, restrain his unlawful desires; he sent for her to the palace, and his high rank overcame her sense of duty. After some time the matter was likely to become public: this David feared, and anxious to conceal his guilt from the eye of the world, he sent for Uriah, her husband, on a frivolous errand, in order that the child might be considered his own. Uriah came at his command, and the king, after making some inquiries concerning the war, desired him to go down to his house, which the soldier refused, indulging himself in the romantic idea that it did not become him to enjoy his home, while his fellow soldiers were enduring hardship in the field. Thus frustrated in his designs, David imagining that intemperance might lead him to go home, was base enough to make him drunk; but even then his purpose failed; the soldier, overcome with wine, lay down at the door of the palace and fell asleep. What now was to be done to hide his guilt, and to shield him from Uriah's rage? Human nature left to itself is fruitful in evil designs, and this appears to have been peculiarly the case with David at this time; he resolved upon the perpetration of another most dreadful crime in order to conceal his guilt: he resolved that Uriah should be slain, and he sent a letter by

him to Joab, with instruction to that effect. He was to be placed in the front of the battle that he might "be smitten;" and in this situation, the brave soldier died, fighting for the man who had so deeply injured him: and David, lost to all feeling of shame, publicly took Bathsheba to wife.

Although David had sinned thus grievously, for some time he seemed unconscious of his error; he even went to the scene of battle where Uriah had fallen by his orders, as though nothing had happened. But sooner or later we must feel compunction for our crimes; and happy is it for those who feel it in this world, and repent. David took the city of Rabbah, making the principal men thereof prisoners; after which, he returned home in triumph. But he had no sooner done so, than Nathan the prophet was commissioned to convict and reprove him for his crimes, which he did with great wisdom and prudence. He related to him the circumstance of an inhuman action a rich man had committed against a poor neighbour, and he related it in such an affecting manner, that the king, not perceiving its parabolical drift, in his zeal, pronounced a sentence of death upon the offender. Nathan seized the favourable moment; David had pronounced judgment upon himself, and as the messenger of heaven, he exclaimed, "Thou art the man!" after which, he set before him the heinousness of his crimes in such glowing language, that David was convicted, and he cried out in the bitterness of his soul, "I have sinned against the Lord." How much he felt upon his conviction, and that his repentance was sincere, may be seen in the fifty-first Psalm, which he penned on the occasion; every word of which seems to have been written with a tear of blood, and which is a fine picture of a repentant sinner pleading for mercy at the throne of grace. Nor did David plead in vain: Nathan was directed to assure him, that the Lord had put away his sin; but he was to be fearfully chastised in this life by his own family, and the child that was born unto him was to be cut off; nor could his fast-

and weeping, with his agonizing prayers that it might be saved, avert the threatened blow; the child expired for his transgressions.

For some time after this, David enjoyed prosperity and peace, and he might, perhaps, have imagined that the Lord had forgone his purposes; but the denunciations of Divine wrath are sure, sooner or later, to fall upon the head of the transgressor. Amnon, his son, an unprincipled youth, committed incest with his sister, and then turned her out of doors, for which act, Absalom, another son, slew him at an entertainment while heated with liquor, after which he fled to the king of Geshur, with whom he remained three years. These circumstances must have been painfully afflicting to David; but his domestic troubles ended not here. His resentment having ceased, Absalom was recalled from banishment to enjoy all his former privileges, save entering into the king's presence, which he was prohibited from doing for two years. This was a very slight punishment for the crime of fratricide, and he ought to have repaid it with acts of filial love; but instead of this, by soft and flattering speeches, he stole away the hearts of the king's subjects, and incited them to open rebellion, and so formidable was the conspiracy, that David was obliged to flee for his life, attended only by a few faithful friends. Among these were the ministers of religion, who carried with them the ark of God, which would have been the greatest comfort to David, at any other season; but he considered himself now under the chastening hand of God, and unworthy of the tokens of his presence. He therefore caused them to return; "Carry back," said he, "the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee: behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him."

The design of the Almighty, in chastening the creatures of his hands, is to humble them in his sight. If it has

this effect, his end is answered; and such was the effect it had upon the mind of David; his soul was so prostrated by the strokes he *had* and *was* enduring, that not even unmerited insult could arouse his feelings. Thus, when Shimei, a descendant of Saul, came out throwing stones at him, and heaping the most dreadful imprecations upon his head, instead of punishing him for his conduct, as his servants wished him, he meekly replied, "Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him; it may be, that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day."

Upon the flight of David, the wicked Absalom took possession of the royal city, and not content with driving his aged father into exile, he committed the unheard-of crime, of taking his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel: thereby, it is true, executing the Divine threatening, but at the same time, enhancing his own guilt. Nor did he stop here; he pursued his father with the intention of committing parricide; but his guilty career was soon ended; a battle was fought, and the ungrateful and unnatural rebel was slain.

We observe now the intensity of a father's love for his offspring, though undeserving the slightest regard. David, in the excess of his love, had given orders, at the commencement of the engagement, that his son should be spared; and when he heard of his death, he cried out in agony of soul, "O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" Such excess of grief, for such a rebellious son, can scarce be vindicated; but David looked not at the rebel, but at the son; and who can set a limit to the tender feelings of a parent? His grief appears to have been so great, that he could not attend to his duty, and it gave umbrage to his people, upon seeing which, Joab remonstrated with him, telling him that the affections of the people would be estranged from him. This remonstrance had the desired effect; though David inly mourned, he dried up his tears and appeared in public as before.

The monarch was not precipitate in returning to the seat of government ; he wisely waited to be assured of the public favour ; which assurance he in a short time received. He was recalled by the general voice, and conducted back over Jordan, and so zealous were the tribes both of Israel and of Judah in their services, that it produced a sharp contention between them, which should be honoured with the precedence. The contention had well nigh led to more fatal consequences than the rebellion of Absalom. Urged by one Sheba, a factious Israelite, Israel took up arms against Judah ; but the insurrection was quelled through the zealous loyalty of the latter, and they returned to their duty, and David once more reigned in peace.

But though David was freed from the horrors of civil war, he was not free from calamity ; a grievous famine ravaged the kingdom, during three successive years. This, upon inquiry of God, he found to be the result of Saul's oppression of the Gibeonites, and seven of the sons of Saul fell a sacrifice to justice, as a necessary expiation ; after which, David enjoyed peace and prosperity : faction and discontent was known no more in his dominions. Foreign enemies, also, were subdued, and powerful nations had become either tributary or allies. So vast was his power, that he, unambitious as he had been in former times, became elated with his greatness ; and prompted by vanity, he gave a command that his people should be numbered. This was wrong, and even the wicked Joab remonstrated with him on the impropriety of his conduct ; "the king's word was abominable to him," but David was obstinate, and the people were numbered. For this sin, he was punished by a pestilence, which cut off seventy thousand ; more, indeed, had perished, but David, clothed in sackcloth, offering himself to the stroke of Divine justice, pleaded for the life of his people, and the hand of the destroying angel was stayed.

The bodily infirmities of David now indicated approaching dissolution ; but his mental faculties remained unimpaired, and to the last moment of his life he employed

them for the glory of God and the good of the nation. To avoid all rivalry between his sons, he settled the succession upon Solomon, who, notwithstanding the opposition of his brother Adonijah, was acknowledged heir to the throne by the unanimous voice of the people. They received their new governor with acclamations of joy, and with earnest prayers for his prosperity; and his aged sire, also, gave thanks unto God, for the completion of the promise that Solomon should reign.

Shortly after this, the aged monarch, perceiving that he was on the verge of the valley of the shadow of death, called for his son, and gave him a charge respecting the erection of the temple. This charge was given in the presence of the princes, the captains of the army, and all the heads of the nation, whom also he exhorted to assist in the undertaking. His discourse was so animated, and showed that the work lay so near his heart, that his people responded to his exhortations, by making the most liberal contributions on the spot towards its erection: all were anxious to show their gratitude to God, and their veneration for the illustrious character of their dying monarch. Their zeal was so great, that it seemed to invigorate him with fresh powers; he broke forth in the most lively and devout acknowledgements for the exceeding grace of God in them; he sang the praises of his God, and called upon all to unite with him in a solemn act of worship. In the midst of these religious ordinances, Solomon was again crowned, and David, predicting blessings upon his head, resigned the regal authority to him.

David had now no more to do with earth, nor did it cause him any uneasiness, for his hopes were fixed upon a better world. In the prospect of death, he expressed his firm conviction of his interest in the covenant of God. "Although," said he, "my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." Thus we see, that faith in the Redeemer supported him in his

dying moments. Of Him, he had often sung in the sweetest measures in his evangelical Psalms, and to Him he now looked for salvation, although his advent was yet remote in time. In this faith he died triumphantly, at the age of seventy years, forty of which he had sat upon the throne of Israel.

The character of David, notwithstanding his enormous offences, for which he repented and received pardon, is nevertheless one of exalted piety, and well deserves our imitation. The infidel and the scoffer may cast ignominy on his name, but God hath called him his servant. He was, moreover, a prophet, who under various characters and images, foretold the coming of the Son of Righteousness; and he was not only a prophet to foretell his coming, but he was an eminent type of the character he foretold. This, our Saviour himself, and Saint Paul, under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have confirmed. Frequently, indeed, is the Messiah called David in the Sacred Writings, inasmuch as he was the antetype of the former; and in comparing their lives, many striking parallelisms may be discovered, sin always excepted.

SOLOMON.

Nor lofty intellect, the heart keeps clean
 From moral taint, or yet illumines the mind,
 By nature dark; else Solomon had been
 The purest earth-born creature we could find.

In him the rays of wisdom brightly shone,
 His fame for wisdom spread through earth's wide sphere;
 E'en Sheba's queen descended from her throne,
 The wondrous accents of his lips to hear.

She came and heard, and all amazed, confessed
 How wise he was—wise far beyond compare;
 And yet he strayed from paths that maketh blest,
 Into the paths that leadeth to despair.

BORN, A.M. 2971. DIED, 3029.

IN every character recorded in the Holy Scriptures, we view more or less the pride of human glory debased. In no character, however, is this so conspicuous as in that of Solomon; in him we behold a man raised above all his fellow-creatures, either past or future, in understanding, who nevertheless disgraced himself by the foulest apostasy. At one time we behold him sitting as it were on a pinnacle of glory, at another grovelling in the dens of infamy, —so powerless is intellect in the preservation of holiness.

This celebrated monarch was the son of David, by that Bathsheba whose charms allured him from the paths of virtue. After the fruit of their guilt had been cut off, and while David was yet mourning over his fall, the prophet Nathan was sent to comfort him, and to predict the birth of Solomon. This prediction was a very remarkable one, and although it was fulfilled in him, doubtless it had reference to One who said of himself, "a greater than Solomon is here." When the child was born, Nathan was again commissioned to go to the palace to declare the Divine favour towards him, and to give him a name significant of

heaven's regard. He was called Jedidiah, "the beloved of the Lord."

Concerning the infant years of Solomon nothing is recorded: we may presume, however, from the character of his sire, that he was instructed rightly, and from his early piety, that he profited by those instructions. In accordance with the Divine predictions, David, before he closed his eyes in death, caused Solomon to be publicly consecrated to his office, and notwithstanding the opposition of Adonijah, his brother, he was fully established in his kingdom. The first acts of his public life have an appearance of severity, but when we consider who the characters were that were cut off—that they were men who had long merited punishment; and when we further consider that he acted by the counsels of his father, and that he was intrusted with the supreme authority, "for the punishment of evil doers," we must conclude that the deaths of Joab and Shimei, and even that of Adonijah his brother, were no more than acts which justice sternly demanded at his hands. Such it appears they were considered by his subjects, who not only feared but loved their king, for it is said, "And the Lord magnified him exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel;" and why? because he "loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father."

Soon after he ascended the throne, Solomon held a solemn festival, before the ancient tabernacle of Moses at Gibeon; there he paid his public devotions to the Most High, and his conduct so pleased the Lord, that in a vision of the night, he promised to give him whatever he desired. Solomon availed himself of this offer; but what was the burden of his petition? not riches, or dominions, or conquest, or glory, or pleasure, but an understanding heart to govern his subjects. This was a wise and noble request, and the Lord was so pleased with him for preferring such a petition, that he gave him a promise of the most exalted wisdom, to which he added riches and

honours beyond all other kings of the earth; length of days was also promised him, if he persevered in the path of duty. After the solemnities were concluded at Gibeon, Solomon returned to Jerusalem, where he offered many sacrifices, and sealed his vows before the ark of the covenant; thus giving his testimony in favour of religion in the sight of all Israel, which could not fail of having the best effects upon the whole nation.

That God had answered the petition of Solomon was made manifest, in a remarkable case upon which he was called upon to pronounce his judgment, the decision of which gained him high renown. Two women who had lived together were each delivered of a son, and in the night one of the infants died, and its mother took it and laid it by the side of the other as she slept, and took the living child as her own. This produced a violent contest between the parties, and the matter was laid before the king, in whose presence each maintained her right to the living child. No evidence, however, could be brought forward in support of the claims of either, and in this dilemma the king ordered the living child to be divided, and by so doing produced the evidence of parental affection. Its mother, rather than see her offspring slain, relinquished her pretensions, while the other was clamorous for the execution of the sentence. *Whose child it was*, by this artifice became evident, and it was restored to its parent. It may be remarked, that the fame of this decision of Solomon is supposed to have given rise to many experiments of a similar nature; thus the emperor Claudius discovered a woman to be the mother of a son whom she disdained to own, by commanding her to be married to him, to avoid which she confessed the truth. Ariopharnes also, king of the Thracians, arbitrating between three men, who all claimed to be sons of the Cimmerian king and demanded the succession, discovered the heir by ordering each to shoot an arrow into the dead body of the king, which order the son alone refused to obey. The Hindoo writings relate another circumstance

more remarkably coincident than either of the preceding. A woman bathing left her child on the tank, when a female demon carried it away. Both appeared before the Deity declaring their right to the child; and a command was given for each to seize it by a leg and an arm, and to pull with all their might in opposite directions. No sooner had they commenced than the child screamed, and the real mother left off pulling and resigned her claims to the other, and from her so doing, the judge decided it was hers.

But Solomon was celebrated not only for wisdom in judicial matters, but for his general management of state affairs. By his deep skill, peace and prosperity abounded; his subjects were united, his dominions undisturbed and enlarged, and wealth and magnificence vastly increased. Nor did his wisdom stop here; he was learned in various sciences, he spake much and wrote much in morals and natural philosophy for the instruction of mankind. Most of his compositions are lost, but three of his books, those of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and his Song of Songs, hold a distinguished place in the sacred canon.

We have seen that a promise had been given to David that Solomon should build a temple for the living God. We have seen also that *that* monarch on his death-bed enjoined him to this great work. Nor was he unmindful of the promise or the injunction; it seems indeed to have been one of the leading objects to which he early directed his attention. He sent to Hiram the Tyrian king, whose subjects were renowned for their skill in architecture, for a proper person to superintend the building, and for workmen and materials. Hiram supplied him with all he desired, and a most magnificent structure was erected, a structure which has been much celebrated in Jewish history. When the temple was completed, Solomon himself dedicated it to God in the most solemn manner, and conducted the ark of the covenant into the most holy place appointed for it, with songs of thanksgiving; and "the glory of the Lord filled the house" in approbation of

his conduct. The king then declared his design in the erection of the temple, and praised God for the completion of his promise; after which he spread forth his hands toward heaven, and uttered a deep and fervent prayer for the favour of God to all who should bow before him in the temple. When his petitions were ended, he arose from his knees and gave his people his benediction, entreating and charging them to dedicate themselves to the service of Jehovah. This festival lasted fourteen days, during which time sacrifices were offered continually. At the end of that time the people were dismissed, and they departed with sentiments of love to their monarch, and gratitude to their God.

The fame of the wisdom of Solomon had become so universal, that many came from afar with costly gifts to be instructed by that wisdom which God had put into his heart. One remarkable instance is minutely recorded. This was the queen of Sheba, whom our Lord calls "Queen of the South." She came from a remote country with a great company, and camels that bare spices and gold in abundance, and precious stones, to commune with him of all that was in her heart, or in other words, to consult him on some difficult points in religion. This excellent woman, on whom our Saviour has bestowed a high encomium, and who adduced her example as a reproach to those who neglected to hear his words, in strains of admiration confessed the high attainments of Solomon, pronounced his people happy, and praised God for placing such a man on the throne of David.

Thus far the reign of Solomon was glorious. He had continued faithful to God, and he had been rewarded by all that heart could wish. The favour of the Most High rested upon himself and his people, and he was the envy and admiration of all the surrounding nations. But ah! how is he fallen! and that too in his declining years. Some have imagined that the first cause of his declension from the path of duty was his alliance with the daughter

of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Be this as it may, the final cause of his apostacy from God was, that he "loved many strange women," whom he collected from all nations, and by whom he was enticed to acts of idolatry. So true it is that "evil communications corrupt good manners." He bowed the knee to Ashtoreth, "the Venus of the Syrians," to Molech, "the god of the Ammonites," and to Chemosh, "the god Bacchus," worshipped by the Moabites.

Such conduct, as might be expected, brought severe judgments upon himself and the nation. The tranquillity of his reign was disturbed by intestine divisions and foreign foes; Hadad, the Edomite, regained the throne of his ancestors by force of arms, from the hands of Israel, and Rezen, a robber, seized upon Damascus, and made himself king of Syria. These two formed an alliance, and were potent foes to Israel all the latter days of Solomon. He also received a message from God testifying his displeasure, and signifying his intention of dividing his kingdom after his death, and his own servant, Jeroboam, was to preside over ten tribes of Israel. The Divine threatening seems, at first, not to have had its intended effect upon his mind, for his resentment was kindled against Jeroboam, and he sought to slay him; yet he died a penitent. This his book of Ecclesiastes, which was written in his old age, after long experience of sin and folly, abundantly testifies. Herein he confesses and deploras his errors; and, taking up the character of a preacher, warns others from following his example; and herein he also describes the vanity and vexation of spirit attendant upon all sublunary pursuits. Solomon died after a reign of forty years, and was succeeded by his son Rehoboam, but according to the word of the Lord, ten tribes revolted, and were governed by Jeroboam.

Should we possess brilliant talents, the fall of Solomon speaks loudly to us not "to be high-minded, but fear." If he, who possessed such talents, with such clear views of the Redeemer as his writings exhibit,—if he, who was

also an illustrious type of that Redeemer,—if he fell, let all those who think themselves secure by wisdom, take heed lest they fall likewise.

Do good ; shun evil ; live not thou
 As if at death thy being died ;
 Nor error's syren voice allow,
 To draw thy steps from truth aside.
 Look to thy journey's end—the grave !
 And trust in Him whose arm can save.—MOIR.

ELIJAH.

Then lived Elijah, mighty seer,
 By ravens daily fed ;
 Who in God's holy name and fear
 A life of wonders led.
 Nor did his death less testify,
 A prophet's sacred claim ;
 Triumphantly upborne on high,
 With car and steeds of flame.—BARTON.

Translated to Heaven, about A. M. 3108.

WHILE Scripture abounds with instances in which worldly pomp and distinctions have been bestowed on men unworthy of the world, it also abounds with instances in which men of whom “the world was not worthy,” have “wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.” This may appear an anomaly in the order of Divine providence, but we have only to look over a few short years, and to contemplate the end of each, to be convinced that it is right.

Among the foremost in the list of those who suffered for righteousness' sake, stands Elijah, one of the most eminent prophets of the Old Testament, and one of the most exalted favourites of heaven. This great man

a native of Tishbeh, a city of Gilead; and he is first introduced to our notice in the Sacred History, as delivering an unwelcome message to Ahab, the most wicked of all the kings that had hitherto reigned over Israel. This monarch had married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, and by her influence he was so perverted from the right way, that he substituted as the national religion, the false worship of Baal, for that of the one true God. For this wickedness, Elijah was commissioned to declare to the apostate monarch, that there should be neither dew nor rain on the land for three successive years. The warning was given with promptitude and faithfulness, and failing to have any effect upon Ahab, was fulfilled,—a fruitful land was turned into barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwelt therein.

Terrible indeed must have been the effects of this drought in Israel; but, in the midst of this general calamity, there was one who was preserved from its ravages in a wonderful manner; Elijah was commanded to take up his residence “by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan,” where he was to drink of the brook, and to be fed by ravens. Strong in faith the prophet obeyed the command, and “the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook.” In this secluded situation the prophet continued for some time thus miraculously sustained. At length the brook dried up, and the ravens failed in their attendance; but the Lord had not failed him, he still extended the same care towards him; he directed him to go to Zarephath, a town of Phœnicia, assuring him that a widow would there sustain him, and he accordingly left his seclusion to enter again into the society of men. When he arrived at Zarephath, the same Providence that had directed his steps thither, brought the woman out of the city to meet him. But what was her object in coming thither? it was not to congratulate the weary wanderer on his arrival, and to welcome him to her well-furnished board, but to gather a few

sticks in order to bake her last meal ere she and her only son laid themselves down to die with hunger. How then was she to support another? Thus reason would ask; but Elijah nothing doubting, when she related to him her pitiful case, requested, and persisted in his request, commanding her to make him a cake first, and then to make for herself and son, adding this remarkable promise, that her barrel of meal should not waste, nor her cruse of oil fail, until the day that rain descended upon the earth. The woman believed his words, "And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah."

While the prophet resided with this widow, her son fell sick and died. This was a grievous trial to her, and she could not help complaining to the prophet: under deep convictions of guilt she considered it a calamity, inflicted by *his* hand upon her for past offences, and she desired him to depart from her. But Elijah, participating in her distress, went and poured out his soul before God, and the child, in answer to his prayer, was restored to life and to his mother's arms. This was the first miracle of the kind that had ever been wrought upon earth. Great, therefore, must have been the faith of this man of God, to have asked and to have expected such an event to take place, and great was the honour conferred upon him for that faith.

The period at length arrived when the famine was to cease, and although Ahab humbled not himself nor sought its cessation, Elijah was commanded to present himself before him, to intimate that Israel would shortly be delivered from its ravages. The monarch, it appears, had sought the life of the prophet, during the time he was smarting under the rod of heaven, imagining that he was the cause of their affliction; but this was no obstacle to Elijah in the path of duty; he feared not his wrath, but went fearlessly on his errand. As he was going he met Obadiah,

the steward of Ahab, who was traversing the land in search of water for the cattle. This good man had preserved his integrity in the midst of a corrupt court, and had been an instrument in the hand of God of preserving a hundred of his prophets, by concealing them by fifties in a cave. When he met the prophet, he fell on his face and said "Art thou my lord Elijah?" He replied, he was; and bade him go and inform Ahab of his arrival. This command gave him great uneasiness; he was afraid if he told his master, the Spirit of the Lord would, in the mean time, convey him away, and his life would be the forfeit of the apparent false intelligence; but upon Elijah making a solemn asseveration that he must see Ahab that day, he went, and the king came to meet the prophet; but he came with no entreaties to be delivered from the famine; as soon as he met Elijah, he charged him with being the troubler of Israel. This charge he repelled, and had the holy boldness to turn it against the king himself; he reproved him for his iniquities, and ascribed all the miseries of the land to his idolatrous practices. He then commanded Ahab to convene all the priests of Baal upon Mount Carmel in the sight of all Israel.

That such a man as Ahab should obey the command of Elijah, whom he considered his greatest enemy, is a matter of surprise; but it is probable that he considered it would be a good opportunity of slaying him. Be his motive what it might, Ahab, with eight hundred and fifty false prophets, came at the time appointed, and Elijah *only* stood before them, to vindicate the cause of the one true God. As they thus stood, Elijah, undaunted by their numbers, made this bold appeal to Israel: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God follow *him*: but if Baal, then follow *him*." Elijah then proposed that two sacrifices should be offered; one by the prophets of Baal to *their* deity, and one by himself to Jehovah, and that he who should answer by fire should be considered as their God.

It has been observed, that "the idea of a trial of power

between gods different and adverse, was not unknown to the ancient heathen;" but how magnificent and convincing is the evidence of the power of Jehovah with which this transaction concludes, compared with the trickery adopted by the heathen priests in the behalf of their respective gods on such occasions. Rufinus relates a story analogous to the present as regards the agency employed: "The Chaldeans," he says, "who adored fire, carried their gods into several countries, to try his power over the different gods of other nations; he baffled the images of brass, gold, silver, wood, or of whatever materials they were made, testifying his power, by reducing them to dust, and by so doing, established his worship wherever he came. At length he was brought to Egypt; here the priest of Canopus conceived a stratagem which succeeded in evincing the superiority of the god whom he served. The jars in which the Egyptians were wont to purify the waters of the Nile, were perforated on all sides with small imperceptible holes; the priest took one of these, and stopping up the holes with wax, fitted to the jar's mouth the head of an idol; when, therefore, the Chaldean priests applied their fire to it, the heat melted the wax, and the water flowing out, extinguished the fire, giving Canopus the victory over the god of the Chaldeans."

How different is the transaction in which Elijah was concerned; there was no artifice used by him; all was clear as the sun in noon day. The priests of Baal accepted his proposal, and after making preparations, cutting themselves with knives and lancets, they invoked the aid of their deity; but it was in vain, "there was no voice, nor any that answered."

Elijah waited for some time, but when it was evident that it was in vain, with words of the severest irony, he ridiculed their expectations. But this, instead of convincing them of their folly, only served to increase their ardour; they renewed their cries, but still they cried in vain. The day was now far spent, and Elijah preparing an altar, laid the victim thereon, then causing water to be

pooured three times over the sacrifice, he addressed a fervent prayer to Jehovah to decide the contest, that his people might be recovered from their apostacy. He spake, and when he ceased, fire fell from heaven and consumed the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water in the trench; and the people convinced by this miracle cried out, "The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God." While under this conviction, Elijah, as though possessed of supreme authority, commanded the priests of Baal to be slain according to the Divine law, and the people executed his command, in the sight of Ahab.

Elijah now gave the monarch an assurance that there would be an abundance of rain, and when he returned to Jezreel, accompanied him thither, probably in hopes of carrying on the work of reformation; but he had no sooner arrived there, than he heard that Jezebel, enraged at the slaughter of her prophets, had determined that *he* also should be slain; on hearing which he fled into the wilderness, where He who had before commanded the ravens and the widow to support him, sent an angel with food for his sustenance.

Like his predecessor Moses, the prophet continued in the wilderness forty days; at the end of that time he came to Horeb, the Mount of God, where God again revealed his glorious majesty, as he had done to his servant of old. A mighty wind first rent the mountains and tore in pieces the rocks; then there was an earthquake, and then a fire, but the Lord was in neither, but in a "still small voice" that followed. Elijah stood in the entering of the cave, and the voice asked him "What doest thou here, Elijah?" He complained that he had been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts, but all in vain, for idolatry covered the land, and of all the prophets of the Lord, he alone was left, and *his* life was sought. Thus evincing that he was a man of like passions with ourselves by sinful despondency. He seems to have imagined that the case of Israel was a hopeless one; that they had gone so far from ori-

ginal righteousness as to be past recovery, and that his services were no longer needed ; but the Lord sent him to his work again : he commissioned him to anoint Hazael king over Syria, Jehu over Israel, and Elisha to the prophetic office in his room ; and he was encouraged to obey the mandate by the fact hitherto unknown to him, that there were seven thousand in Israel who had neither bowed their knees to Baal, nor kissed him. Well then might the poet sing, in allegorical language,

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness in the desert air.—GRAY.

Elijah obeyed the injunction, and executed the commissions God had given him ; and Elisha, who was anointed to become his successor, became his attendant during his life.

Although the prophet had fled from Ahab to secure his life, nevertheless, when he received a command again to present himself before him, and to denounce the vengeance of heaven against him, he hesitated not to obey. This was on the occasion of the murder of Naboth, to obtain his vineyard ; Ahab had a desire for this vineyard, and he wished to purchase it, but Naboth refused to sell his patrimonial land ; and this refusal affected him so much that he fell sick ; Jezebel discovering the cause of his indisposition, taunted him for his weakness, and taking the management of the affair into her own hands, she caused Naboth to be slain, and then bade Ahab arise and take possession. The monarch came to the spot, and while he was surveying the ill-gotten treasure, Elijah stood before him, and pronounced his own doom, and the destruction which awaited his impious queen, and the whole of his posterity.

After this, Elijah appeared no more to Ahab, for very shortly after, that monarch perished in the manner the prophet had described. We see Elijah, however, again executing the Divine commission at the hazard of h

Ahaziah, who had ascended the throne of Israel, fell sick, and he had despatched his servants to inquire of an heathen oracle whether he should recover, and while on their way Elijah met them, and commanded them to return to their lord with a declaration that he should certainly die for his contempt of the God of Israel. This excited the rage of the king against him, and he sent a troop of soldiers to apprehend him. They accordingly went, and requested him to go with them; but Elijah, moved by inspiration, called down fire from heaven, and it fell, and consumed them. Regardless of this dreadful event, another troop was directed to go, and they likewise perished; still unconvinced of his error, a third company was despatched by the king, but the leader, instead of requesting the prophet to go with him, sued for his life. Elijah was now directed to go with them, and in the chamber of the monarch repeated his former threatening, and yet escaped unhurt.

As the life of Elijah had, in many respects, been extraordinary, so was his end. Soon after the above transaction, while engaged in visiting the schools of the prophets, he was warned of his departure, and taking with him Elisha, he went towards the river Jordan, and by the same miraculous power that Moses and Joshua had exercised, he smote the waters, which divided, and they passed over on dry ground. When they had gained the opposite shore, "behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."

Once since his glorious translation Elijah appeared again on earth. On Mount Tabor, with Moses, the illustrious lawgiver of Israel, he held a conference, as the great restorer of that law, with the Messiah, the fulfiller of all righteousness, on the great work of human redemption. Seeing then such honours were bestowed on him, what becomes of the apparent anomaly in the order of Divine providence in the sufferings of the people of God? Verily, their "light affliction, which is but for a moment,

worketh for" them, "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Every thing in the world that is great and glorious, nay, the wondrous globe itself, must decay; but they shall live for ever in glory—shall stand in the presence of their God.

When shrivelling like a parched scroll
The flaming heavens together roll ;
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead.—SCOTT.

ELISHA.

In him Elisha we behold,
A being of superior mould,
One purified from all self love;
In all he did, where'er he came,
This only was his holy aim—
The woes of others to remove.
Yet when, as delegate of heaven,
To him the dread command was given,
To doom the guilty unto death;
He, like a God, severe, but just,
All faithful to his sacred trust,
Breathed on them his destroying breath.

BORN, A. M. 3073. DIED, 3163.

WHEN any eminent servant of God is taken away from earth, we are ready to lament the loss as irreparable, forgetting, that He who raised up the departed one, is able also to raise up another equally faithful in the execution of his work. Thus, when Elijah was translated to heaven, much concern prevailed among the sons of the prophets, and they eagerly sought him amid mountains and valleys, in the hope that he was not in reality departed. But although they returned in sorrow, convinced that he was taken from them, they received comfort, in that the Almighty had appointed a successor: with joy t^h

exclaimed, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha." This great man was called from a low station in life to his exalted office; as he was following the plough, Elijah passed by and cast his mantle upon him. This he understood to be, as it really was, a call from God, and he unhesitatingly left all his former connexions and engagements, and became the constant attendant upon Elijah, sharing his poverty and his persecutions. Long time he enjoyed his holy converse, and deeply was he attached to his master. This his conduct displayed on the day of Elijah's departure; though entreated to desist from his attendance, again and again he declared, "I will not leave thee!" Nor did he leave him; he was honoured with witnessing the translation, and obtained, as he had requested, with the falling mantle of Elijah, a double portion of his spirit.

Elisha soon experienced the assistance of that spirit; on his return he smote the waters of Jordan, and they again divided and he passed over. This was observed by the sons of the prophets, and they joyfully acknowledged him as the successor of Elijah. Nor was this the only transaction which proved his Divine legation; a succession of miracles of mercy and of judgment followed in its train. Elisha took up his residence at Jericho. This was a pleasant situation, but the waters were impure, and the country barren; at the request of its inhabitants, Elisha, by simply casting salt into the water, in faith, healed it; its brackishness was purged, and the land became fruitful. This fountain, which is still existing, is thus described by a modern traveller: "Its waters are received into a basin about nine or ten paces long, and five or six broad, and from thence issuing out in good plenty, divide themselves into several small streams, dispersing their refreshment between this and Jericho, rendering it exceedingly fruitful. Close by the fountain grows a large tree, spreading its boughs over the water." This miracle was followed by a miracle of judgment. Removing from Jericho to Bethel, a company of youths of that city, where the golden calf was worshipped, came out and poured personal con-

tempt upon Elisha, and derided the translation of Elijah by bidding him "go up" after his master. This was exceedingly impious, for it was not only an act of disrespect to the prophet, but a direct insult to the power and majesty of God. But they did not act thus with impunity; Elisha turning back, in the name of the Lord pronounced the Divine vengeance upon them, and at his word, two bears issued from an adjoining wood and destroyed forty-two of the revilers; a fearful punishment indeed, and one which ought to be a warning to youth not to despise the aged servants of God.

From Bethel, Elisha proceeded to Mount Carmel, and from thence to Samaria; but he did not long remain in seclusion. He was called upon to attend the armies of Israel, Judah, and Edom, whom he saved by his prayers. They were in danger of perishing, not only by their opponents, the Moabites, but by drought; in this distressing situation the associated monarchs waited upon Elisha, soliciting his aid. Two of these kings were idolaters, and one of these idolaters was Jehoram, king of Israel, whom the prophet boldly reproved for his hypocrisy in applying to him, and for his blind attachment to the idolatries of his father's house, and plainly told him, that were it not for Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, he would pay no regard to his entreaties. For this pious prince, who was steadfast in the worship of Jehovah, the prophet however had regard, and for his sake he sought of heaven and received an assurance that they should shortly be delivered from the drought, and obtain a victory over their enemies, which came to pass. Yet though the interposition of Elisha had obtained for these kings this miraculous deliverance, it does not appear that he was advanced or esteemed at court, for he continued a poor man. But though poor, he dispensed blessings wherever he came. By the supernatural powers bestowed upon him he wrought many miracles, not for his own advancement, but for the happiness of others. The poor widow of a faithful prophet, unable to satisfy the demands of an

inexorable creditor who had taken her two sons as bondsmen, sought relief at his hands. Her case was truly lamentable; she had nothing in her house "save a pot of oil," an article in itself of little value, but Elisha converted it into a means of deliverance. He multiplied it in so large a measure, that by the sale thereof her debts were discharged, her sons rescued from bondage, and her family supported.

As Elisha was travelling through the land, having, it appears no certain dwelling-place, at Shunem he met with a warm reception from a pious woman. She invited him to her house, and importuned her husband to build him a room, which she furnished with every thing necessary for his use. Grateful for her kindness, and wishing to repay her for the bounties received, the prophet offered to exert his influence for her at court or elsewhere. But the benevolent Shunammite had not bestowed favours in hope of a return; nor was she ambitious; a sweet content pervaded her liberal mind. "I dwell," said she, "among mine own people;" thus preferring the happiness she enjoyed in the bosom of her family to the splendours of a court. Not knowing what further to propose in way of recompense, his servant suggested that his benefactress had no child; Elisha, therefore, gave her the promise of a son, removing thereby her only want; which declaration, notwithstanding the unbelief of the mother and the age of both parents, was fulfilled.

But there is a worm at the root of our earthly comforts. The children of our love may be taken from us at the very time that they form our greatest happiness. Thus it was with this pious woman; no sooner had her child grown up, than he fell sick and died. This was a dreadful shock to her maternal feelings, but her faith supported her; she hastened to Mount Carmel, whither Elisha had removed, to lay her grief before him. The prophet perceived her afar off, and sent his servant to inquire whether all was well with herself and family: and resigned to the will of God, she calmly

replied, "It is well." But human nature must feel the pang of separation, and the Shunammite felt it bitterly. When she came into the presence of the man of God, her agony was so great that for some time she could not speak; she fell down in silence and embraced his feet. At length her powers of speech returned, and she pathetically exclaimed, "Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?" This was sufficient; Elisha understood the meaning of her sorrow, and grieving for her, he sent Gehazi immediately with orders to lay his staff upon the face of the child. This action appears to have sprung from the impulse of his own mind, and as might be expected, it failed in its effect. Gehazi did as he was commanded, but the silence of death still prevailed when the prophet and the mother entered the chamber; but "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." To this Elisha now resorted, and his intercessions prevailed; the child was restored to its mother.

Like his predecessor, Elisha visited the schools of the prophets to instruct them in spiritual matters; and not only their spiritual improvement engaged his attention, but their temporal wants. At one time when oppressed with famine he relieved them; at another when in danger of being poisoned by noxious herbs he saved them; and at another he fed one hundred miraculously, with the very food provided for his own sustenance,—so ready was he "to every good work."

But it was not the schools of the prophets, nor his own countrymen alone, that felt the benefits of his miraculous powers. Naaman, a Syrian general, was afflicted with leprosy, and hearing from a little maid, an Israelitish captive, of the fame of Elisha, he was induced to solicit his assistance. Application was first made to the king of Israel by letter, who, forgetting that he had an Elisha in his kingdom, concluded that it was a subterfuge of the Syrian king for the purpose of provoking a war. Elisha heard of the transaction, and sent a reproof to Jehoram for his neglect of the prophets of the Lord. "Wherefore,"

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said he, "hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." Naaman came, therefore, with much pomp, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha, where as he waited he received a message from the prophet to go and wash seven times in Jordan, and he should be healed. The haughty Syrian, imagining that he was treated uncourteously, on receiving this message, went away in a rage, despising the means prescribed for his recovery. The waters of Damascus he conceived were infinitely superior to the waters of Israel, and therefore he disdained to wash himself therein. His attendants, however, remonstrated with him on the impropriety of his conduct, and he complied with the direction, and experienced the promised cure; and now the mighty warrior was humbled and filled with gratitude, he returned to the prophet and made a confession of his faith in the God of Israel, and earnestly entreated him to accept a present, but the prophet refused, and sent him away in peace,—so truly disinterested was his conduct, and so generous his concern for the honour of religion. Not so, however, was Gehazi; the example of the master was lost upon the servant. He had heard the offer made and coveted the treasures; when, therefore, Naaman had departed he followed, and pretending he was sent by Elisha on behalf of two young prophets who were just arrived on a visit, he requested a talent of silver and two changes of raiment for them. The generous Syrian, pleased at the opportunity of showing his gratitude, doubled his request, and Gehazi returned with his treasure; which he deposited in security, and then stood before his master. But the fraud was not a secret; it had been revealed to Elisha, who, after expressing his abhorrence of the crime, in God's name entailed upon him and his posterity the leprosy of Naaman, "And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow."

Elisha continued to be a blessing to his country, both by his public and private acts. In a war which raged between Syria and Israel, his private intelligence so defeated

the designs of the enemy, that his country was saved thereby from destruction. This brought his life into danger, for the Syrian monarch, discovering the cause of his ill-success, sent a body of armed men to apprehend him. They surrounded the place of his residence, but they were not suffered to harm him ; they were smitten with blindness, and in that condition the prophet conducted them like a conqueror to Samaria, and delivered them up to the king of Israel. Jehoram proposed their destruction as his lawful prey, but full of compassion even for his enemies, the prophet reproved him for it, and taught him the better lesson of mercy, and they were sent away unharmed.

The life of Elisha was again in imminent danger; the Syrian king, unmoved by his generosity, so closely besieged Samaria, that the inhabitants were in danger of perishing by famine. Many indeed died, and others were saved only by the dreadful expedient of consuming their own offspring. The king himself felt the calamity, but so hardened was his heart, that instead of applying to Elisha for relief, he regarded him as the author of the evil, and he sent an executioner to destroy him. Elisha was aware of his danger, but he stirred not from his house; he received the messenger with undisturbed tranquillity, and suffered no harm. Soon after, the king himself came, probably with an intention of seeing his purpose carried into execution; but Elisha pacified his resentment by telling him that on the morrow the calamity would cease, and that plenty would abound. The thing appeared so incredible, that one of the courtiers ridiculed the assertion, but Elisha calmly replied that he should see it with his eyes, but should not partake of the blessing. This prediction was accomplished; the Syrians, imagining they heard the sound of a mighty host, suddenly raised the siege and fled, leaving all their wealth and all their provisions behind; and the people overjoyed at their deliverance thronged the gate, and the courtier whose doom was

foretold, being appointed to take charge thereof, was trodden to death in the crowd.

About this time the kindness of the Shunammite to Elisha received a further recompense; by his counsel she escaped the famine, and by his influence, after the famine had ceased, she recovered her possessions, of which she had been unjustly deprived.

But the labours of Elisha were not exclusively confined to Israel; shortly after this we find him in Damascus, the capital of Syria, where that monarch resided who had sought his life; but Benhadad was on a bed of sickness, and his animosity was removed. Hearing he was in the city, he sent to him Hazael, his prime minister, to inquire of the Lord whether he should recover. The behaviour of Elisha to Hazael was very remarkable; he told him that his master might recover, inasmuch as his disorder was not in itself fatal; but he added, "the Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely die," then fixing his eyes steadfastly upon him, he burst into tears. He foresaw the miseries the man who stood before him should bring upon Israel, and prophetically warned him of the wanton cruelties he was about to exercise. On hearing the black catalogue of crimes which was laid before him as his own, Hazael was astonished; he could not believe it was in his nature to perform such deeds of cruelty, and revolting at the base idea, he exclaimed, "But what! is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" and yet upon his departure he immediately began to fulfil the prediction by slaying his prince and usurping his throne.

The Almighty had determined on removing Jehoram from the throne of Israel, and he revealed his intentions to Elisha, who sent one of the young prophets to anoint Jehu, king in his stead. For a long time after this event no mention is made of the prophet; but though he lived in obscurity, we may conclude that he was employed usefully, and honoured by his God; for when his hour of dissolution drew nigh, among his weeping attendants we

and Joash, who was king of Israel at that time. Elisha died at the age of ninety years, above sixty after he had received the appointment to his prophetic office, which he discharged with so much zeal and fidelity. His end was not so triumphant as that of his master; but though he had to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, doubtless he entered into that world of spirits whither Elijah had ascended before.

The miraculous powers with which Elisha had been invested in life, not altogether ceased in the tomb; a dead body coming into contact with his mouldering dust was restored to life. This was probably designed to teach that infidel age the certainty of a resurrection. Nor does it teach them alone; by it we are taught to look to One superior, to the great Elisha, to Him who was dead and is alive, and who "through death has destroyed him that had the power of death," in order that we may have a sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection, may sing—

These ashes too, this little dust
Our Father's care shall keep,
Till the last angel rise and break
The long and dreary sleep.

Then love's soft dew on every eye
Shall shed its mildest rays;
And the long-silent dust shall burst
With shouts of endless praise.

KIRKE WHITE.

JONAH.

He was a prophet ; yet a man,
 With errors rankling at his breast ;
 In him we proud self-glory scan,
 And anger that begets unrest.

No matter what a nation feels,
 So he preserves his own fair fame ;
 If not, his anger he reveals,
 And pours on heaven itself the blame.

Prophecied about A.M. 3200.

THE effects of the fall of Adam are seen more or less in the character of every man, not even excepting the most eminent servants of God. This truth receives a peculiar illustration from the conduct of Jonah the prophet, who was, it is supposed, the author of the book which bears his name, and which represents himself in a very unfavourable light. Jonah was the son of Amittai, a prophet of Gathhepher, in Galilee; he lived and prophesied in Israel about the time of Jeroboam the Second, not long after the time of Elisha. With the subjects of his general prophecies we are unacquainted; the book refers only to one particular commission which was given him to execute at a distance from Judea; he was sent to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, a large and abandoned city, to predict its destruction. The command and his duty were explicit, but Jonah, knowing that God was "a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness," feared that if the Ninevites repented, their destruction would be stayed, and he should be accounted a false prophet; he therefore left his abode, and fled from the presence of the Lord, hoping that he should hear no more of the command.

But vain were the hopes of the prophet; "the eyes of

the Lord are in every place," He marked the steps of the fugitive, and was resolved to bring him back to his duty. Jonah had embarked in a ship, and was sailing on the mighty waters for Tarshish, as if Tarshish was a place where God was not. The bark rode smoothly along towards the desired haven, and Jonah was slumbering his hours away in apparent security, when all on a sudden a mighty tempest arose, which filled the mariners with alarm for their safety. Still Jonah slumbered on regardless of the danger; but at length when all hopes of saving the ship had vanished, the shipmaster, who was probably a stranger to the living God, roused him to prayer, sounding in his ears, words, that must have been at once an alarm and reproof to his guilty soul: "What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not."

The prophet awoke, but whether he obeyed the injunction to pray we know not; if he did, it was unanswered. The storm still raged, and it raged with such unusual fury, that the sailors concluded that Divine vengeance pursued some one among them for some uncommon crime. They therefore determined upon casting lots, if haply they might discover the guilty person. This act was in itself superstitious, but the providence of God overruled it for the detection of Jonah, for on him the lot fell, and he confessed his sin.

Deep must have been the prophet's anguish when he saw that the wrath of heaven had overtaken him; when he saw that there was no escape from God, and that the guilty must suffer. Amid this anguish he pronounced his own doom, directing the mariners to cast him overboard, as on his account the storm had evidently arisen. They were, however, unwilling to execute the sentence, and for a long time struggled to gain the land, but it was all in vain, Jonah was demanded at their hands, and they had no alternative but to commit him to the waves; he sank in the waters, and all was calm.

After such an event, who could expect to hear

more of Jonah? and yet we find him again on earth; he had gone down into the mighty deeps, but he perished not. That God to whom the secrets of those deeps are known, and who can make every living creature serve him, had prepared "a great fish" to swallow him up alive, and after he had been entombed in its belly three days and three nights, He caused it to yield up its prey unharmed, in answer to the prophet's earnest penitential prayer.

Much profane wit has been levelled at this transaction. Taking it for granted a whale is meant, the infidel sneers at the statement, since the swallow of the whale is not large enough for man to pass. But the text does not say a whale, but "a great fish," and though our Saviour alluding to the circumstance mentions it as a whale, the name collated with the original is to be understood not as the name of any one fish, but as a common name for the larger tenants of the mighty waters. Until, therefore, it can be shown that there is no "great fish" capable of swallowing a man, this objection is abortive; that there are such has been proved, for entire bodies have been found in some of the different species of the shark. One explanation, however, might allow it to be a whale,—that is, to suppose it did not swallow Jonah, but only detain him in its mouth. This might be the case, and it is well known that the mouth of a common whale when open, presents a cavity not only large enough to contain a man, but a merchant-ship's jolly-boat full of men. But vain are the cavils of the sceptic on this or any other subject connected with the Bible; nothing is too hard for the Lord; to Him, as has been well remarked, "it was not harder to preserve Jonah in the belly of the fish, than the three youths at Babylon in the midst of the burning fiery furnace."

Jonah was now again commissioned to go and preach at Nineveh, and having learnt obedience by his sufferings, he went accordingly and predicted its overthrow. The inhabitants of that vast city attended to his words, and believed in the Lord; they had doubtless heard of his mighty

deeds, and were convinced that the God of Israel was able to perform that which he had spoken by the mouth of his prophet. They therefore humbled themselves before Him, from the greatest to the lowest, with fasting and weeping, and mourning, hoping that He would turn away from them his fierce anger.

The swains forgot their sheep, nor near the brink
Of running waters brought their herds to drink;
The thirsty cattle, of themselves, abstained
From water, and their grassy fare disdained.—DRYDEN.

Their distress reached the throne of heaven, and God in his mercy spared them. This example of the Ninevites was adduced by our Saviour as a reproof to that generation to which he preached: "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment against this generation and shall condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah. And, behold, a greater than Jonah is here."

It might have been supposed that the prophet, when he heard of their penitence and deliverance, would have rejoiced and praised God for his mercy. But it was not so; "it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry." He would rather have seen the city and its inhabitants involved in one common ruin than that his word should have failed. He bitterly complained that his predictions were falsified, and wished to die, as if he was of more importance than the thousands that were saved. This conduct of Jonah was exceedingly sinful, and the Lord was displeased with him for it, and yet his displeasure was attended with much tenderness. He rebuked him, but it was in love, and in such a manner, as to convince him of his folly without the strokes of his rod. Jonah had retired a short distance from the city waiting with eager expectation to see it consumed; here he sat ruminating upon his supposed grief while the sun smote upon his head, and as he thus sat, the Lord prepared a shelter for him; a gourd, generally supposed to be the *Palma Christi*, a plant somewhat like a lily, with large

smooth leaves, miraculously sprung up, and overshadowed him. This was, as we shall see, intended to convince him of his error; Jonah was exceedingly pleased with the gourd, and as he reposed beneath its shade, it seemed to lighten his grief; but while he was thus rejoicing, as suddenly it had grown up, so suddenly was it removed; a worm smote its root, and he was left to faint beneath the noontide rays. And now again his grief burst forth, he mourned for the loss of his gourd, and as before, wished to die. Still the Almighty bore with his impatience, and, intent only upon the correction of his evil temper, thus expostulated with him: "Doeſt thou well to be angry?" The fretful prophet in reply presumptuously exclaimed, "I do well to be angry, even unto death." Still his mercy failed not; gentle reasoning from the mouth of God followed this ebullition of wrath from his creature: "Thou haſt had pity on the gourd, for the which thou haſt not laboured, neither madeſt it grow; which came up in a night and perished in a night: and ſhould I not ſpare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than ſixſcore thouſand perſons that cannot diſcern between their right hand and their left hand; and alſo much cattle?"

What effect this wiſe and concluſive reaſoning had upon the mind of Jonah we know not, as his hiſtory ends here; yet we may infer from the fact of his having related his own ſinfulneſs in ſuch glowing terms, that he was convinced of his error. Let us take warning by his example, and guard againſt an undue love of ſelf and the indulgence of evil temper; two mighty barriers in the path of our religious duties.

But the hiſtory of Jonah teaches us things of more importance even than theſe; it teaches us to look to the death and reſurrection of the Son of Man which it ſhadows forth. As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, ſo alſo was the Meſſiah three days and three nights in the lower parts of the earth, from

whence he arose, according to the Scriptures, for our salvation. Let us so live in the faith of that Saviour, as to adopt these words of the poet with confidence:—

To thee we look, to thee we bow,
To thee for aid we call;
Our life, our resurrection, thou,
Our hope, our joy, our all.—NEWTON.

HEZEKIAH.

His only praise attends the pious heir;
He in whose soul the virtues all conspire
The best good son from the worst wicked sire.
Behold! in Hezekiah's golden reign
Long exiled piety returns again;
Again in genuine purity she shines,
And with her presence gilds the long neglected shrines.
DR. LOWTH.

BORN, A.M. 3253. DIED, 3307.

THAT the evil example of wicked parents is oftentimes fatal to the moral and religious improvement of their offspring, none can deny, for scripture history and daily experience combine in the attestation of the lamentable fact. Yet the rule is not general; there are exceptions to the contrary, exceptions in which the grace of God has triumphed over the effects both of evil example, and innate corruption. This is strikingly exemplified in Hezekiah, the king of Judah, who, although he was the son of the most wicked sire that ever breathed, was nevertheless eminent for his zeal and piety. Hezekiah ascended the throne of Judah at the age of twenty-five years, at which time the kingdom was reduced to a very low state; its strength was exhausted by defeats and captivities, and through the impiety of his father, Ahaz, the people were sunk into the

grossest idolatry. What, then, could have been expected from the son of such a prince? or who could have wondered to have read of him that "he walked in the ways of his father?" and yet how glorious is the reverse; though educated in the midst of idolatry he did "that which was right in the sight of the Lord." At the very commencement of his reign he effected a reformation; the temple, which had been long neglected and profaned, and which was falling into decay, was repaired, and its doors once more thrown open for public service. The priests and Levites, who had deserted their post, were recalled to their sacred duties, and the people, whose hearts God had prepared, with cheerfulness joined in the solemnities of Divine worship.

All this was done in the first month of the first year of his reign, and, encouraged by this success, the good king determined to proceed further. He summoned all his own subjects, and invited also the ten tribes of Israel which had been long separated from Judah, to assemble at Jerusalem to keep the passover together, and by that ordinance to renew their covenant with God. But in this he was not so successful; sin, and its concomitant, ignorance, had long prevailed in Israel, and the invitation, with few exceptions, met with general contempt and ridicule, and the ambassadors were insulted.

But not so was the summons to Judah; treated they unanimously obeyed, and for fourteen days together continued in the worship of God. They destroyed the idolatrous altars which had been erected at Jerusalem, and celebrated the passover, and worshipped Jehovah according to his own instituted rites; the ministers taught the people, and their prince excited them to a holy emulation, both by example and by precept. This ordinance had the best effect upon the minds of the people, for when it was ended their religious fervour ceased not. Throughout all Judah they brake their images, cut down the groves, destroyed the altars, removed the high places, and even dashed in pieces the brazen serpent which Moses had

erected, because it had become a temptation, and an instrument of evil. This, doubtless, was done by the order of their prince, that they might not return to their former abominations.

That the reformation might be complete, Hezekiah restored the stated services of the temple, and the priests and the Levites were required to preserve their appointed courses. Thus did this good king labour for the honour of God, and he received honour in return. Not only were his pious schemes attended with success, but he prospered also in the administration of his government; he subdued the Philistines, and cast off the Assyrian yoke to which the nation had been long subjected. After some years, however, it pleased God to try him by affliction, but this only tended to display the real excellence of his character and his exalted faith in the Lord. In the fourteenth year of his reign, Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, who had already destroyed or led captive the ten tribes of Israel, threatened also to destroy his kingdom. He invaded the country, and penetrated nearly to Jerusalem, upon which Hezekiah prepared for a vigorous resistance, and fortified the town. But it was not in his armies, nor in his fortifications, that he trusted for deliverance; he appointed his captains, and exhorted them to sustain the siege with courage, but it was in confident expectation of the Divine interposition in their favour. "There be more with us," said he, "than with him; with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles."

But we must not suppose that the faith of Hezekiah was perfect; this in our fallen state would be impossible. There was one sad failure in the principle for which he was so eminent; contrary to the prophet Isaiah's command, he sent to solicit the aid of Egypt, and when these succours failed him, he gave way to a sinful distrust, under the influence of which he impoverished himself and robbed the temple of its treasures and ornaments. This was in order to bribe Sennacherib to withdraw his forces,¹

scheme failed, and Hezekiah, taught by experience, trusted no more on man, nor wavered in his dependance on God.

Sennacherib, intent upon the destruction of Jerusalem, now sent his generals to invest the city, and to summon Hezekiah to surrender. They came to the very walls, and there, not only ridiculed his expectations from Egypt, but his faith in Jehovah. They also exhorted the people to desert their prince, and promised them plenty, and security, under the rule of their master. At this message Hezekiah was deeply distressed; he saw that the situation of himself and people was a very critical one, and that nothing but a display of Divine power, manifested on the behalf of Jerusalem, could save them. Here alone was his hope and his refuge; with outward tokens, therefore, of humiliation, and infelt emotions of godly sorrow, he repaired to the temple, accompanied by his nobles, to seek that aid. From hence he sent to solicit the intercession of Isaiah on their behalf, and received an immediate reply, that the profane Sennacherib should be constrained to depart from them, and should die by the sword.

Yet was the faith of Hezekiah to undergo still further trial; deliverance was delayed, and the Assyrians still raged against God and his people. Another summons to surrender was given by letter, in which the most impious irreverence and defiance of Jehovah was expressed. On receiving this, the king again betook himself to the throne of grace; he spread the contents before the Lord, and ardently besought Him to interpose for his own name's sake, and his prayer prevailed. The prophet was again commissioned to confirm the promise, and to assure him of speedy relief; and on that very night, as they lay slumbering in their tents,

A mighty angel from the Eternal God,
Breathed death upon the slumbering host, and sent
The impious monarch, overwhelmed with shame,
Back to his native land and idol gods.

No less than one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians perished, and Sennacherib, confounded and dis-

graced, fled to his own country, where he perished by the hands of his own sons "in the house of Nisroch his god."

This miracle receives a valuable testimony, although the narrative is distorted, from the pen of Herodotus, a profane historian: he says, "At this time there reigned in Egypt a priest of Vulcan, named Sethon, who neglected and contemned the military establishment which had been formed in Egypt, and among other dishonours which he put upon the soldier caste, he withdrew the allotment of twelve acres of land, which under former kings had been allowed as the portion of every soldier. After this, when Sennacherib invaded Egypt with a great army, not one of the military class came forward to his assistance; the royal priest seeing no help before him, withdrew to a temple, where, standing before the image, he deplored bitterly the evils with which his kingdom was threatened. As he wept, sleep overpowered him, and he saw in a vision the god standing by, who, bidding him be of good cheer, assured him that no harm should befall him if he marched out against the Assyrians, for he would himself send him assistance. Sethon took courage from this vision, and collecting a body of men, none of whom were soldiers, he marched out and formed his camp at Pelusium. The night after his arrival, myriads of field-mice infested the camp of the enemy, gnawing in pieces their quivers, their bow-strings, and the straps of their shields; so that, in the morning, finding themselves deprived of the use of their arms, they fled in great disorder, and many of them were slain." "This," says a learned writer, "is evidently nothing more than an adaptation to Egypt, its king, and its gods, of what belonged to Judah, to Hezekiah, and to the power of Jehovah." This manifest interposition of heaven on behalf of Hezekiah, excited, as well it might, the attention and wonder of surrounding nations. He was magnified in their sight; they venerated him and sought his regard by many valuable presents; riches and honours were heaped upon him, which he enjoyed to the end of his life.

But this was not the only affliction Hezekiah had to endure for the trial of his faith. A sudden and dangerous disease brought him to the brink of the grave, and a message from God bade him prepare to leave the world, as his disorder was in its nature fatal. In this distress Hezekiah again resorted to prayer, and received in answer, a declaration, that, on the third day he should be perfectly restored, and that fifteen years should be added to his life. For the confirmation of his faith, the shadow of the sun was carried back ten degrees, that is, the light was protracted in a miraculous manner, in token of his recovery. The promise was fulfilled, and, grateful for his deliverance, the pious king went up to the temple to celebrate the goodness of God.

Up to this period the sacred historian has delineated the character of Hezekiah, not indeed as spotless, but, nevertheless, one of peculiar eminence. But, alas for human nature! Soon after his recovery, his obedience became defective: from a conceit of his own importance, on account of distinguished favours, his heart was lifted up with pride. The king of Babylon sent ambassadors to him with presents, and letters of congratulation on his restoration; but instead of instructing these princes in the knowledge of Jehovah, and recounting in their ears his mercies towards him, he made a vain display of his grandeur, and exhibited, to their wondering sight, his palaces and treasures. For this vanity Isaiah was commissioned to reprove him, and to denounce a woe upon him and his people; the very men to whom he had paid his court, were to seize upon the treasures he had exhibited, and to reduce his descendants to the meanest captivity. This must have been an unwelcome message to an ambitious mind; but, unwelcome as it was, Hezekiah gained by the rebuke; he humbled himself before God, and obtained a respite. The evil was not to come in his days; and Hezekiah, constrained by the sense of mercy, exclaimed to the prophet who predicted the woes, "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken."

On his repentance, Hezekiah was immediately recovered from his fall, and from that time to the day of his death, continued steadfast in the paths of holiness. He also increased in power, and riches, and honour. Under his fostering care the nation enjoyed uninterrupted peace and prosperity, and very deeply were his subjects attached to him. When he died they deplored his loss, and showed their regard for him by interring him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David. This was a great honour, but a far greater awaited him among the sons of God in heaven. Nor does it await him alone; all those who die the death of the righteous shall receive the reward of the righteous. To all these—

One beating pulse, one feeble struggle o'er,
May open wide the everlasting door;
Yes, for that bliss unspeakable, unseen,
Is ready, and the veil of flesh between,
A gentle sigh may rend—and then display
The broad full splendour of an endless day.—JANE TAYLOR.

JOSIAH.

At length the long expected Prince behold,
The last good King; in ancient days foretold;
When Bethel's altar spoke his future fame,
Rent to its base at good Josiah's name:
Blest happy prince! o'er whose lamented urn,
In plaintive song, all Judah's daughters mourn;
For whom sad Sion's softest sorrow flows,
And Jeremiah pours his sweet melodious woes.

DR. LOWTH.

BORN, A. M. 3356. DIED, 3394.

FERVENT piety in any stage of life, is a pleasing picture to look upon, but more especially is it pleasing to behold youth, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, walking in the fear of God. This is a sight which the very angels look down upon with admiration, and if ?

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of God's people are dearer to him than another, these are the objects ; they share his peculiar love, and partake his choicest blessings.

Among the many examples of early piety on record, none is more illustrious than Josiah, king of Judah. This good prince was the son of Amon, the grandson of Hezekiah. Amon was an idolater, and had renewed the former idolatries throughout the land ; but his reign was transitory, for he fell by the hands of violence. At this time Josiah was only eight years old, at which tender age he ascended the throne. Little good could be expected from such a child, and surrounded as he was with allurements to vice and with evil example. But "while he was yet young," says the sacred historian, "he began to seek after the God of David his father." What were the means employed in bringing him to this happy state of mind we are not informed ; we may, however, rest assured that it was the effect of Divine grace.

It does not appear that Josiah undertook the management of state affairs till he was twenty years of age ; at that time he commenced the arduous task of reforming a corrupt nation, and recovering them once again to the worship of Jehovah. In this work he was employed till the eighteenth year of his reign, at which time his labours were crowned with complete success ; the altars, the images, and the groves were destroyed, and the idolatrous priests, who burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven, were either branded with infamy or slain with the sword. The very bones of the idolatrous priests, which had long lain entombed, he caused to be disinterred and burned upon the altar of Bethel ; thus fulfilling the Divine prediction in which he himself was described by name, and by which this duty was assigned him near three hundred and fifty years before. He was, however, ignorant of this prediction till it was literally accomplished. All this was done under his own immediate inspection, so zealous was he in the cause of religion.

But it was not the reformation of his own dominions alone that engaged the attention of Josiah. By permission he extended his labours and exercised a similar authority in all the cities of Israel, which were at that time subject to the Assyrians. Nor was it sufficient for Josiah to destroy the idolatries of the land; he was solicitous also to establish true religion in its stead, and like Hezekiah, he caused the temple, which had again been neglected and profaned, to be repaired in order to restore the appointed services.

During the progress of these repairs, Hilkiyah the high-priest discovered the book of the law. This, it has been supposed, was the original writing deposited in the ark by Moses, and so much had the word of God been disregarded, and so scarce were the copies of it, that neither the king nor his subjects were at all conversant with its contents. It was presented to Josiah and read before him, and by it he found how far they had departed from God, and to what extent of wrath they were exposed. This discovery deeply affected him, and he sent to inquire of the Lord whether the judgments might be averted; but the word was gone forth, and the Divine oracle, by Huldah the prophetess, declared that it could not be recalled; Jerusalem must perish. But Josiah, for his tenderness of heart and his deep humiliation before God, received a promise, that before that day arrived he should be removed from the earth.

When Josiah perceived the importance of the word of God, he was anxious that his subjects should be acquainted with it; he therefore summoned the elders of the nation, the ministers of the church and state, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to the temple, and there in the capacity of a preacher read aloud those awful denunciations which had so affected him; there also he bound himself by covenant to serve the Lord, and required his people to enter into the same engagement. To this all agreed, and Josiah, desirous that their vows should be ratified in the most solemn manner, determined upon a celebration of

the Passover. Accordingly the people throughout his dominions were enjoined to the strictest observance of this long neglected rite, and never was the piety and zeal of Josiah more conspicuous than on this occasion. Himself was the foremost and most active in the holy work; he not only required the attendance of his people, but instructed and encouraged the priests and Levites in the discharge of their important duties. This Passover was the most remarkable that had been held since the days of Samuel, whether we regard the numbers that attended, the costly sacrifices offered, or their compliance with the minutest circumstances of the appointment; so completely successful had Josiah been in establishing the ordinances of religion.

But though the service of Jehovah was now maintained in its purity, and though the nation complied with the regulations, the generality of them, according to Jeremiah, were dissemblers.

Hypocrisy, formality in prayer,
And the dull service of the lips was there.—COWPER.

There was, therefore, no remedy for them; and soon after the death of Josiah destruction came upon them, and they were carried captive to Babylon.

The death of this amiable prince took place under circumstances for which he has been censured; but it is probable that we are not sufficiently acquainted with them to decide upon his conduct; all we are informed is, that in the thirty-first year of his reign the king of Egypt was passing through his land to attack the Assyrians, and Josiah went out to withstand him, and received a wound of which he died as they conveyed him from Megiddo to Jerusalem, where he was buried, deplored by all his subjects, but by none so much as Jeremiah, who upon that occasion composed his Lamentations, and foretold the miseries that would fall upon the people. Such a death would seem to have been a judgment upon him for provoking the war, but it was doubtless in mercy to himself and in judgment to the people that he was thus removed; for at this time—

The wheels of an incensed avenging God
 Groaned heavily along the distant road;
 And Babylon set wide her two-leaved brass,
 To let the military deluge pass.—COWPER.

Jerusalem was on the eve of destruction, and, judging from the anguish Josiah felt on discovering her perilous situation, death was more welcome to him in any shape than the witnessing the consummation of her doom. Besides, sudden death is not always in judgment or an awful event; to the servants of God it is sudden glory, and such we have every reason to believe it was to Josiah. He had laboured all his life with all his powers for the glory of God, and he could not fail to receive his reward at death. Thus may we labour; then, whether we die a sudden or a lingering death, all will be well with us, well to all eternity.

JEREMIAH.

The prophet wept for Israel; wished his eyes
 Were fountains fed with infinite supplies—
 Wept till all Israel heard his bitter cry,
 Stamped with his foot and smote upon his thigh;
 But wept, and stamped, and smote his thigh in vain:
 Pleasure is deaf when told of future pain,
 And sounds prophetic are too rough to suit
 Ears long accustomed to the pleasing lute.
 They scorned his inspiration, and his theme,
 Pronounced him frantic, and his fears a dream;
 With self-indulgence winged the fleeting hours,
 Till the foe found them, and down fell the towers.

COWPER.

Prophesied from A.M. 3376, to A.M. 3418.

VERY interesting and instructive is the conduct of Divine providence when viewed in connexion with the Jewish history; there we learn that God is gracious, indeed, slow

to anger, and plenteous in mercy. Notwithstanding their frequent rebellions, prophet after prophet was raised up from age to age to reprove them, and to call them to repentance; but it was all in vain. In the discharge of their office these holy men had much of "cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword;" until at length the measure of the iniquities of Israel was filled up, and they were given over to destruction.

One of the most eminent of these prophets was Jeremiah, whose history is recorded in the book which bears his name, and which is his own composition. Jeremiah was invested with the prophetic power at an early age, and at the time that Josiah began to purge the nation of its idolatries; and he continued in the execution of his office during the reigns of the last five kings of Judah amidst much persecution. When he was first called to the work he refused it out of diffidence of himself, pleading his youth and his lack of eloquence. But his objections were overruled, and God engaged not only to qualify him for his office, but to support and protect him in it. The desolation of Judah was shown to him in a vision, and he was required to warn the princes and the people that their abandoned conduct had so provoked the majesty of Heaven, that their destruction was at hand. Such a message could not be otherwise than offensive to them, and therefore he was informed that their rage would be excited against him, and that bonds and afflictions awaited him, but that he should be rescued from their fury.

It is probable that the prospect of suffering might occasion painful feelings in the breast of the young prophet; but they were no obstacle in the path of duty. He had received a positive command from God, and he fearlessly stood forth as a preacher of righteousness, and aided the king in his attempts to restore the true worship, by most solemn addresses to the people on their evil ways. From the united efforts of such a zealous prince and such a

faithful prophet, complete success might have been looked for; but the work advanced slowly, and the change that was wrought was but external; the people were restrained indeed from idolatry by the civil power, but the reformation not being in their hearts, they were ready to return to it again.

While Josiah lived, the prophet was protected from insult and persecution, but no sooner had that prince entered into his rest, than he was called upon to undergo the severest trials; he had to contend with foes in his own native place, among the priests of Anathoth, and even among his own kindred. Provoked by his admonitions, they plotted secretly how they might destroy him, but no action or design, however secret, is unknown to God. He saw it, and though Jeremiah was like an ox or a lamb brought to the slaughter, the Lord rescued him by giving him timely information of their evil intentions. Jeremiah referred his cause to the Almighty, and though forbidden to prophesy more, boldly reproved the men who had designed his death, and denounced the judgments of God against them. Nevertheless he was but human, and it would appear he felt as man; he was discouraged, and he complained to God of the treatment he met with, but he was incited to continue, though still more painful trials awaited him in his labours. He therefore resumed the execution of his office, and, by a variety of significant actions as well as words, warned Judah of impending ruin. But his conflict with that abandoned nation was so severe, that Jeremiah again displayed the traits of a fallen nature by peevishness, and by murmuring at his task; but the Lord had compassion on him, and while he still required his services, he bestowed a renewed promise of support and protection.

How greatly he stood in need of the Divine aid, the whole of his history declares; every remonstrance on his part served only to incense the people against him. He now declared before the princes, priests, and people, that they would be a prey to the Chaldeans for their evil ways,

and this raised up enemies on every hand; the whole multitude derided his message as the production of a deluded brain, and sought how they might take away his life. Pashur, a priest high in office, had indeed, the bold daring to beat and imprison him; on the next day, however, he was released, and under the Divine inspiration, predicted the captivity and awful death of his persecutor. But he was again disheartened by their opposition, and wrong tempers were again displayed; the painful conflict he had to endure, the fears and discouragements he felt, and the hard thoughts he had harboured against God on this occasion, are all related by himself with affecting simplicity, deep humility, and pleasing ingenuousness.

But Jeremiah did not act weakly in the execution of his office; though nature keenly felt the opposition to which he was exposed, the word was, to use his own emphatic language, "as a burning fire in his heart," and he could not be silent. It was a conflict that caused him much anguish, but faith prevailed; from this time we hear no more of impatience or weariness in his work, though his trials were by no means abated. At the commencement of the reign of Jehoiakim, he preached repentance to the people in the courts of the temple, and foretold the destruction both of the temple and the city. For this he was seized by the priests and the prophets, and was brought as a criminal before the tribunal of the princes, before whom he stood undaunted, declaring that he had spoken only the word of God, and warned his very judges to take heed of themselves. On this occasion he displayed a sweet submission as well as magnanimity. "As for me," said he, "behold, I am in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you." The elders of Israel were disposed to favour him, they pleaded his cause, and through their intercession and the influence of Ahikam he was liberated.

From this time Jeremiah seems to have been prohibited from repeating his admonitions in the temple; but his lips were not sealed, nor the infatuated multitude left unad-

monished. Baruch, a scribe, was directed to supply his place, by reciting publicly what he had uttered privately; this again brought him into danger, information thereof was carried to the king, and he demanded the book to be brought and read before him. But its awful contents, instead of humbling him, aroused his indignation; he destroyed the writings, and directed the prophet and the scribe to be apprehended, with the intention of destroying them also; but this was not permitted. They were so effectually concealed, that they eluded the search of the officers; their escape, however, is not to be ascribed to their own vigilance, or to human agency, but to God; He it was that protected them, for it is said expressly, "the Lord hid them."

But the prophet did not long remain concealed, nor, though he had so narrowly escaped with life, did he decline the further execution of his office. Life to him was now nought in comparison of the fulfilment of his duties; he again wrote down those declarations which had incensed the king, adding the most awful denunciations against him for his flagrant conduct; this was also given to Baruch, probably to publish as before, and yet they escaped unhurt.

At length the long predicted judgments took place, and Jeremiah saw this impious prince and the son who succeeded him hurled from their throne, and with many of their subjects carried captives into Babylon. This, though his words were fulfilled, was a great affliction to him; he mourned over his exiled countrymen, and did all in his power to comfort them; he sent to them by letter, urging them not to give heed to seducing prophets who held out delusive hopes of a speedy return. But he left them not in despair; he cheered them by a distant hope that at the end of seventy years they were to return, and till that time arrived, he exhorted them to wait patiently in faith and prayer, without which he well knew they must be wretched indeed.

But Jerusalem, though reduced, was not yet desolated:

Zedekiah was placed upon the throne by Nebuchadnezzar, and held the crown as his vassal. But he had not long held it before his counsellors, false prophets, with their pretended divinations, encouraged him to throw off the yoke of subjection, which Jeremiah, notwithstanding their rage against him, opposed. He fearlessly maintained that it would be both vain and impious to resist the Babylonish monarch, and predicted that if they did so, they would be utterly desolated; but his words were disregarded, and he was thrown into prison. Zedekiah listened to the flattery of the false prophets, and by his perfidy provoked Nebuchadnezzar to besiege the city.

The prophet, though immured within the walls of a prison, was not reft of comfort; while there he received fresh communications from heaven both cheering and delightful to his soul. In answer to prayer, a confirmation of former promises was made to him that, although the city should be destroyed, it should be rebuilt, and its peace and prosperity re-established. In full confidence that this revelation would be verified, he purchased a family estate, and gave directions for the preservation of the writings in order that it might fall into the hands of his descendants. But there was a still greater comfort than this imparted to the prophet; he also received an assurance (improbable as it might appear from the forthcoming desolation) that the Messiah should yet arise from the seed of David as had been long foretold, and that under his sway the church should possess a security and happiness hitherto unknown.

Although Zedekiah had disregarded the word of the prophet, yet when the armies of Babylon encompassed the city, he sent in great alarm to intreat his intercession, and a short respite was granted; but it was not immunity from destruction. The Chaldeans withdrew their forces to attack the Egyptians, but the conduct of Zedekiah and his servants demanded their return. During this short interval of peace, Jeremiah was set at liberty, but it was only that their hatred should be renewed against him for his faithfulness. When the city was first assaulted, there

appears to have been a degree of reformation; Zedekiah had liberated the slaves, and had confirmed their freedom by a solemn covenant. No sooner, however, had the Chaldeans retired, than the covenant was violated, and the new made freemen were again enslaved, for which act of treachery Jeremiah predicted that accumulated woes should come upon them, from which there was no escape. This enraged them against him, and they seized the first opportunity of revenging themselves upon him.

Before hostilities were renewed, probably wearied out by their long continued opposition and persecution, he endeavoured to flee the city, and to seek a retreat in the country; but he was frustrated in his attempt, he was apprehended by a guard, and under a charge of deserting to the enemy, was beaten and thrust into a dungeon to the imminent danger of his life. His sufferings were, however, soon mitigated; profligate as the monarch of Judah was, he had some remains of reverence for the man of God, and he sent for him from his cell to consult him; the reply of the prophet was by no means favourable, and yet he attended to his expostulations in his confinement; and though he did not liberate him as he ought to have done, he appointed him to a less rigorous confinement, and gave orders for his regular sustenance while food remained in the besieged city.

But his faithfulness as a preacher did not admit of a long continuance of favour from the abandoned monarch; the elders of the people represented him as a turbulent fellow whose life should no longer be spared, and they were permitted to cast him into a deep airy dungeon. Death must soon have been the issue of this barbarous act, but God had not forgotten him; he was again rescued through the mediation of Ebedmelech, an Ethiopian eunuch, in the palace, and was restored to his former prison. That act of piety and kindness failed not to obtain its reward,—the illustrious stranger received an assurance from the mouth of the prophet that the Lord would protect him from the sword in the day of calamity, which came to pass accordingly.

The prophet was again brought before Zedekiah in order to confer with him, and he again repeated his admonitions in his presence; there was no alternative but desolation for his crimes, and Jeremiah, painful as it must have been to his feelings, could not do otherwise than declare the truth, if haply he might repent, and the evil be mitigated. But the monarch still continued impenitent, and Jeremiah lingered in prison in chains till Jerusalem was taken. That was a day of desolation indeed; distress, confusion and carnage prevailed throughout the city, but amidst this dreadful scene, the arm of the Lord was stretched forth for the defence of his servant, and after the conflict was over he put it into the heart of the Chaldean monarch to regard him, and Nebuchadnezzar gave him liberty to choose where he would reside.

From attachment to his country, as well as a desire of being useful to the few that still remained in the land, he cast in his lot amongst them; but his desires were vain. They professed to reverence him, solicited his prayers, and promised to obey him, and yet when he urged their continuance in Judea, with a promise of God's blessing if they did, in contempt of God and his prophet they went down into Egypt, and even compelled Jeremiah to go with them. There he witnessed their increasing obduracy and profligacy of manners, for which he reproved them, foretelling their ruin, and the ruin of Egypt also, whither they had fled for safety. Thus did Jeremiah faithfully discharge his duties to his own people the Jews, amid the severest opposition. Nor were they alone the subject of his prophecies; after the prediction of Egypt's overthrow, he addressed himself for the most part to the Gentiles. He prophesied against the Philistines, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Ammonites, the Babylonians, and other people, with a few predictions interspersed concerning the redemption of Israel. This was doubtless to him the most pleasing part of his office: Israel was dear to him notwithstanding the injuries he had received at their hands, and we need no other proof of this than his pathetic elegy, which is termed his Lamentations; for if he mourned so bitterly over their

fall, how must his heart have rejoiced in the prospect, however remote, of their restoration!

Concerning the death of Jeremiah no mention is made in Scripture; but St. Jerome, in his life of that prophet, and Doretheus, bishop of Tyre, in his Lives of the Apostles and Prophets, says that he was stoned to death in Egypt, most probably by his own countrymen, thus sealing his prophecies and his doctrines with his blood. Yes, he—

Fought against frowns with smiles; gave glorious chase
To persecutions; and against the face
Of death and fiercest danger durst, with brave
And sober pace, march on to meet a grave.—CRASHAW.

Much instruction may be derived from a review of the conduct of this eminent prophet and the occurrences of his life; there we learn to consult the will of God and to obey his commands in opposition to a sinful world; there our faith is confirmed, and our hope animated by his miraculous preservation; and there also we are emboldened to rest upon the promises of God in full assurance that He will never leave us or forsake us; will protect us till we have finished the work He would have us to do below; and then, whether we die the death of a martyr, or in peace upon our couch, surrounded by weeping friends, He will send his angels to waft our happy spirits to the regions above, there to serve Him through all eternity.

DANIEL.

. Daniel's life
 Is so replete with goodness, so adorned
 With every virtue, so exactly squared
 By wisdom's nicest rules ; 'twill be most hard
 To charge him with the shadow of offence.
 I've scanned the actions of his daily life
 With all th' industrious malice of a foe,
 And nothing meets mine eyes but deeds of honour ;
 In office pure ; for equitable acts
 Renowned ; in justice and impartial truth
 The Grecian Themis is not more severe.
 Then for devotion and religious zeal
 Who so renowned as Daniel ! Of his law
 Observant in th' extreme, thrice every day
 With prostrate reverence he adores his God,
 And makes his supplication. No affair
 Of state, no business so importunate,
 No pleasure so alluring, no employ
 Of such high import, to seduce his zeal
 From this observance due.—HANNAH MORE.

BORN, ABOUT A.M. 3380. DIED, ABOUT 3470.

RELIGION is not confined to persons of any particular rank or situation in life; the noble plant has been known to flourish in every soil, under all circumstances, either favourable or adverse, from the palace to the cottage. It is true that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called;" it is also true that a blessing has been pronounced by our Saviour upon the humble poor, but we must not infer from thence, that the rich and the honourable are excluded from hope; that would be limiting boundless mercy; besides, the Holy Scriptures prove the fallacy of such an inference by the glorious examples there recorded to the contrary. Among these is Daniel, a man at once illustrious for birth, for wisdom, and for piety.

Daniel was a descendant of David, and he was one of

those princes whom Nebuchadnezzar carried captive into Babylon, with Jehoiakim king of Judah. In that country he became very early distinguished, and he continued to support an honourable character during the several reigns of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus. The way in which he was led to the peculiar eminence he enjoyed, is a convincing proof of the overruling providence of God in the affairs of his servants. The haughty conqueror, not content with leading the Judean monarch and princes in chains, designed to make some of them his servants; he commanded his principal eunuch to seek out from his noble captives those in whom there was no blemish or defect in nature, that they might wait in his palace and be instructed in the learning of the Chaldeans, and Daniel and three others were chosen for that humiliating purpose.

It has been supposed that the real design of Nebuchadnezzar was to pervert the principles of Daniel and his companions, and to destroy both the language and religion of the Jews; but if so, the attempt proved abortive. The principles of these youths were too firmly fixed on the basis of religion to be corrupted, and an incident soon occurred which manifested their integrity. By their religion, they were not only restricted from certain meats, but from all that had been profaned to an idolatrous purpose. When, therefore, provision was brought from the king's own table for them, rather than conform to the sensuality or superstition of the heathen, they requested to be supplied with pulse and water. By the favour of the chief eunuch, whose esteem Daniel had gained, their request was granted, and their integrity was preserved; nor was this all they gained by this act of abstemiousness, their simple diet improved their health, and enlarged their mental faculties; they were better and fairer than those who partook of the luxuries of the monarch's table, and so apt were they in learning, that Nebuchadnezzar "found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm;" so true it is, that temperance

is the grand preservative of the health of the body and the mind, and the only true luxury.

Very shortly after this, Daniel, through his singular wisdom, was brought into favour at court. Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a remarkable dream, the particulars of which, though its horrors still troubled him, when he awoke he could not recall to mind; in this perplexity he sought the aid of the soothsayers, and they not being able either to declare or to interpret it as he required, were doomed to death for their inability. Daniel and his three pious companions being informed of this harsh decree, and apprehensive lest they should also die, as their learned education might involve them in the destruction of the magicians, had recourse to prayer, that the secret might be revealed; their prayer was heard, Daniel obtained a revelation of the dream and the interpretation, both of which he declared before the king, and was immediately acknowledged as a prophet, and made ruler over the whole province of Babylon.

Nothing is recorded of him as a statesman, save that he conducted himself with the strictest fidelity in his important office; nor was he less faithful as a prophet, for when Nebuchadnezzar, who had thus raised him to honour and had a claim upon his affections for the act, consulted him upon the subject of another dream, though smitten with grief at its awful import, which affected that powerful and haughty monarch even to the loss of his reason and throne, he boldly declared its signification, and gave him this advice: "break off thy sins by righteousness and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity." The prediction was accomplished; the king, reft of reason, wandered about as a beast of the field, shunning and shunned by all mankind, an awful example of God's displeasure. After a time, however, his reason returned, and having learned the lesson of humility designed by this affliction, he again ascended his throne.

When Nebuchadnezzar died, it appears Daniel retired

from court and lived in seclusion and in communion with his God, forgotten by all but the queen-widow of that monarch. At the end of about five years he was, however, again brought into public notice under very remarkable circumstances. Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar had ascended the throne of Babylon; this was a very vicious prince, his whole life seems to have been one continued scene of riot and intemperance; and to such excesses did his evil habits lead him, that one day, while sitting at the festive board surrounded by parasites and concubines, he had the daring to send for the holy vessels which had been taken from the temple at Jerusalem for the purpose of prostituting them to debauchery. But this desecration was marked by the eye of God, nor did their impiety escape punishment. As they were indulging in their mad revelry, the finger of God penned the monarch's doom upon the wall opposite his seat; his eye caught the part of the hand which wrote, and, alarmed at the apparition and the mystical characters, he called aloud for the magicians, of whom he required an explanation and an interpretation of the writing. But they were again foiled, none could read and none interpret; confusion prevailed in the palace, and an awful uncertainty in the bosom of all its inmates. At length, however, the queen-mother reminded her son of the eminent wisdom of Daniel, and he was sent for into the royal presence. The prophet came, and the king offered him the highest rewards and honours if he would interpret the inscription. But Daniel knew too well the worth of sublunary honours to be dazzled by such an offer; this his answer to the monarch proved: "Let thy gifts be to thyself," said he, "and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known unto him the interpretation." Before he did this, he boldly charged the monarch with the impious deeds of profaning the vessels of the sanctuary, and of committing a flagrant act of rebellion against the Majesty of heaven. He then read aloud and interpreted to his terrified auditory the mystical writing—"Mene,

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Mene, Tekel, Upharsin. This is the interpretation of the thing: Mene; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. Tekel; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Peres; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." The king heard his dreadful sentence, and, howsoever unwelcome it was to him, he nevertheless bestowed upon Daniel the promised-rewards; he caused him to be clothed in scarlet, with a chain of gold about his neck, and to be proclaimed the third ruler in the kingdom.

This scene was scarcely concluded before the prediction was accomplished; that very night Cyrus, who was general of the forces of his uncle Darius, and who had long besieged the city, caused the course of the river to be turned, and entering in with his army obtained an easy victory, and Belshazzar and his principal nobility were slain by the sword. Thus was the prophecy which Isaiah had uttered two hundred years before, wherein he mentions the conqueror by name, fulfilled to the very letter. The death of Belshazzar caused an entire revolution in the affairs of Babylon; it was divided by Darius and Cyrus into one hundred and twenty provinces, over which those who had rendered the most important service in the war were placed as governors; to regulate the conduct of these governors, a council of three presidents were chosen, and Daniel, whose renown for wisdom and integrity had reached the ears of the conqueror, was made the principal ruler; on him indeed devolved the chief management of the widely extended empire.

But worldly distinctions are not a bower of roses under which the possessor, though pious and upright, may repose, and so Daniel found; his elevation and integrity aroused the jealousy of those beneath him, and they confederated against him. Long time they sought for some occasion in his public conduct that they might accuse him, but they sought in vain, his probity, diligence, and faithfulness to the duties of his function were perfect; having thus no fault against him, they determined to make

his piety the matter of their accusation, and for this purpose, because they dared not attack him openly, they plotted a very artful scheme. It was the practice of this holy man, amidst all the cares that pressed upon him, to retire to his chamber which looked towards Jerusalem, to pray upon his bended knees three times a day; this his enemies knew, and they knew also that he would not forego his pious practice even though death should stare him in the face. They therefore proposed a decree to Darius to this effect, that whosoever should ask any petition of God or man for thirty days, save of himself, should be cast into a den of lions. To this proposal, so flattering to his vanity, without suspecting their intention, Darius consented. He signed the decree, and by that act it was made

Irrevocable as the steadfast law
Of Mede and Persian which can never change.

HANNAH MORE.

Human prudence would have suggested the expediency of abstaining from prayer till that space of time should have been completed; but Daniel was not left to seek a guide. On his soul the light of religion shed its refulgent rays; he well knew that God could protect him from danger, or if he saw proper to permit him to suffer, would take him to himself. When, therefore, he heard of the plan by which his death was to all appearance assured, he neither discontinued his pious practice nor made a secret of his devotions; this his adversaries soon discovered, and the report was laid before the king. The misguided monarch now saw the error into which he had fallen, and he endeavoured to save his faithful minister, but it was too late, the edict could not be reversed, and his accusers were clamorous for his execution. Daniel was accordingly cast into the den of the lions, which was carefully closed and sealed with the king's signet, but—

. Behold a miracle!
The lions charmed with his benignant face,
Hang down their heads; their fierceness is restrained,
And all the pangs of hunger they forego.

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When the king came in the morning to the den he found Daniel was alive; he was saved "because he believed in his God." This miracle was a noble triumph of the true religion, for when Darius caused the conspirators to be cast into the same den they met with instant death, and the mind of the monarch was so impressed with its superiority, that he issued another decree more noble and more just than the former, in which he acknowledged the God of Daniel to be the only living God in heaven and on earth.

But Daniel was more glorious as a prophet of God than as the prime minister of the Medes and Persians. To him it was permitted not only to hold converse with angels, but with the Lord of angels, by whom he was declared to be a "man greatly beloved." Many important events distant in time were revealed to him, and so fully have some of these events been accomplished, that infidels have maintained that they must have been written after their fulfilment. At his earnest supplication, the revolutions then about to take place in the empires of the world, the restoration of his countrymen, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem (objects which amidst all his greatness lay near his heart), were made known to him; the person, the office, the work, and the benefits of the Messiah were also revealed to him, with the precise time of his appearance. So also was the nature and design of his sufferings, the troubles and persecutions of the church, and the final consummation of all things, when the dead shall burst from their tombs and stand before their Judge to receive their just award.

Daniel lived not only during the reign of Darius, which was seventeen years, but also in the reign of Cyrus, under whom he enjoyed the same high honours. In this monarch's reign the Jews were released from their captivity and dismissed to their native land, with permission to rebuild the temple; this must have been a matter of rejoicing to his heart, for though employed in the concerns of a mighty empire, and though he enjoyed such high dis-

tinctions, he could not forget the city of his fathers; oft had he put off his purple robes, and sitting in sackcloth and ashes, prayed for his captive countrymen and desolate Jerusalem; and now his desires were granted, the days of their mourning were ended. Daniel, however, still maintained his post at Babylon, probably on account of his advanced age, for shortly after, he died, full of years, and loaded with honours.

Where this event happened is uncertain, some assert it was in Chaldea, where he was buried in the royal sepulchre; and others say it was in Susa, in Persia, where Josephus relates there remained a tower in his days which Daniel had erected.

The character of this eminent man is one of peculiar value and excellency: from childhood to old age he was a pattern of religious rectitude; nor honours nor persecutions obstructed him in the path of duty. In the palaces of monarchs, in solitude, and in the den of lions he was the same, faithful to his God; his very enemies could find no occasion or fault against him, except his integrity in keeping the law of his God. Let us endeavour so to live, that this confession may be made of us, and this same charge may be brought against us, and then no matter how many or how potent are our foes, we shall rest securely, as Daniel did, under the shadow of Divine favour.

EZRA.

Hail! great reformer of the Jewish race;
 Hail! great restorer of the law divine;
 Hail! for in thee the Christian world may trace
 A friend who aided to erect their shrine.
 Not more the Jewish church of old did stand
 To thee indebted for thy well-timed zeal,
 Than doth the church of Christ in every land.
 For those blest words of life thou savedst or didst reveal.

LIVED ABOUT A.M. 3500.

WITH the history of the Jews the history of true religion is intimately connected. When they suffered beneath the anger of God for their sins it drooped, and when they prospered beneath his favour it flourished; but whether it drooped or flourished, its preservation is to be ascribed alone to his Sovereign Providence; for when it became to all appearance almost extinct, he raised up men in whom he put his Holy Spirit, through whose labours it was revived and re-established. For this purpose, when the Jews returned from their captivity in Babylon, according to the predictions of Isaiah and Jeremiah, he raised up Ezra, a man eminent for learning, holiness, wisdom and zeal. His countrymen had for about eighty years been released from their bondage, and had in the face of many dangers and difficulties under their leaders, Zerubabel and Jeshua, erected the temple at Jerusalem which had been destroyed. But matters still wore an unfavourable aspect: there was the temple, it is true, but the sincere worshipper was wanting; the people possessed but little of genuine piety, and they had formed dangerous connexions with their idolatrous neighbours.

Ezra it appears held a place of trust in Babylon under Artaxerxes, who was then upon the throne of Persia, and who still enjoyed the fruits of the conquests of Cyrus. In

that situation he heard of the irreligious state of his brethren in Jerusalem, and hoping one day to benefit them, he applied himself to sacred studies, that he might be qualified to instruct them. He "prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." When duly qualified, he sought and obtained a commission and assistance in materials for the adorning of the temple, from Artaxerxes, and with others who had been left behind, and whom the Lord stirred up to accompany him, he set forward on his journey to Jerusalem to regulate the government, and to establish the Divine worship.

When we consider the dangers that lay before this man of God, we cannot but admire his ardent zeal in the cause of his God and his country. He had to travel to a distant country through a desert, exposed to hunger and thirst, to the scorching beams of the sun, the rage of wild beasts, and to the assaults of the fierce Bedouin Arab robbers, of which dangers Ezra was well apprized; but they were no obstacles to him, for the Lord was his safeguard. Thus he expressed himself to the king, nor would he solicit a guard, though he might have obtained one, lest he should be reproached with being inconsistent in principle, or with a distrust of God.

But though Ezra sought not aid from the king of Persia, he sought it from the King of kings. Upon their departure from Babylon, he summoned his fellow-travellers, and joining with them in fasting and prayer, implored all needful assistance, and committed them to His care. They then proceeded on their journey, and arrived in perfect safety at Jerusalem; the Lord made bare his arm in the sight of the nations for the salvation of his people; he opened a way for them in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert to give drink to his chosen. No sooner had Ezra arrived at Jerusalem than he commenced the work of reformation, and though he met with great and unexpected difficulties, he nevertheless persevered till they were surmounted. The people had formed alliances and

intermarriages with their heathen neighbours, and had in consequence, turned aside after their abominations; the very princes and rulers were chief in this trespass. These abuses caused him great distress; when he discovered their extent, he sat down in silent astonishment, overwhelmed with sorrow. This behaviour excited the public attention, and when the cause was discovered, those who trembled at the word of the Lord, joined his company; after which he made known his anguish to God in the hearing of the people, confessing their ingratitude, and acknowledging that they had nothing to look for but utter destruction. This distress of Ezra alarmed the people, and seeing them humbled, and some persons of influence having promised him their support, he shook off his dependency and cheerfully laboured in his glorious cause. By the law of Moses, marriages with the heathen were strictly prohibited, and he judged it expedient that they should put away their strange wives agreeably to that law, or at least should renounce their Pagan rites. He therefore assembled all the men of Judah and reproved them for their sin, and his words had such an effect upon the multitude that no rigour was required to carry the law into effect; they unanimously resolved to comply with his injunctions, and bound themselves by covenant to do his will.

To have seen the good effects of his labours thus early, must have been peculiarly pleasing to Ezra, and it probably stimulated him to future exertion, which we have every reason to believe ceased not till his death; for when superseded as a magistrate by Nehemiah, as a priest and a scribe he exhorted the people. For eight days together, at the feast of the tabernacle, he read and expounded the law to the people, upon whom it had the best effect. This is the last mention made of Ezra in Scripture, and where he died is not precisely known. Josephus says it was at Jerusalem, but the general opinion of the Jews is, that it was at Zamzenna, a town on the Tigris, when on his way from Jerusalem to Susa, to have an interview with Artaxerxes

concerning the affairs of his country. Accordingly upon the Tigris, about twenty miles above its junction with the Euphrates, there is a tomb said to be his, to which both Jews and Mohammedans make pilgrimages.

But Ezra is not only famous for the reformation of the Jewish church, according to the law of Moses, but for the arrangement of the canon of the Old Testament. In this opinion, the Jews in ancient times and the Christian church have invariably concurred. The Hebrew Scriptures were collected, arranged, and revised by him, or under his superintendence; so that with reference to this and his other labours, the Jews regard him as a second Moses, for say they, as the law was given by Moses, so it was revived and restored by Ezra, after it had been in a manner extinguished and lost in the captivity. Thus in his private studies as well as in his public exertions, he was a blessing to his country—nor was he a blessing to his country alone; without that portion of the word of God which he collected, the New Testament dispensation which confirms and illustrates that portion would be useless. The harmony of the Holy Book which

. like the eighth sphere doth shine
With thousand lights of truth divine, (COWLEY)

would be broken,—hence the whole world is benefited by his labours. To *us* they are an invaluable treasure; *without* them dark and cheerless would be our pilgrimage on earth, but *with* them joy surrounds our path, and life and immortality is open to our view. With these—

The soul reposing on assured relief,
Feels herself happy amidst all her grief;
Forgets her labour as she toils along,
Weeps tears of joy and bursts into a song.—COWPER.

NEHEMIAH.

It was not wealth, it was not fame,
Nor was it glory that he sought;
No! these his actions all proclaim
He nobly set at nought.

The welfare of his fellow man,
And his Creator's glory, were
The ruling motive of each plan
That asked his thoughts, or prayer.

For these he laboured, these he strove,
Fearless of foes which gathered round;
And all his works of zeal and love
With rich success were crowned.

LIVED ABOUT A.M. 3550.

MUCH has been written in praise of heathen philosophers and warriors who have by their genius or prowess benefited their respective countries, and they are to a certain degree entitled to that praise. The man who loves his country, who enhances its prosperity or saves it from ruin, deserves the gratitude of his own people, and the applause of a world in after generations,—deserves the name of a patriot. But if such men as these demand our admiration, how much more should the deeds of Scripture patriots! Where is the man whose motives were half so pure, half so heavenly as those which governed *their* actions? unlike heathen patriots, they, while they sought the welfare of their countrymen in this world, sought it also in the next, and sought likewise the glory of God.

The history of Nehemiah, which is immediately connected with that of Ezra, whom he succeeded as governor of Judah, is a remarkable illustration of the foregoing observation. Nehemiah was the son of one of those Jews who had gained a comfortable settlement under the Per-

sians during their captivity, and who had in consequence not returned to Jerusalem at the restoration. It is probable he had influence at the court at Shushan, and that he obtained for his son the situation he held as cup-bearer to king Artaxerxes in the opening of his history, a situation which has always been mentioned by ancient writers as a highly honourable and confidential office, the bearer of which possessed great influence from the opportunity he enjoyed of access to the royal presence. Yes, Nehemiah dwelt at the court of Artaxerxes, and might have lived in ease and splendour, enjoying all that heart could wish; but he was not happy there; amidst all his greatness one thing troubled him sore; his brethren at Jerusalem were in great affliction and reproach; they were left without defence and surrounded by foes. With the knowledge of this, Nehemiah "sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven." He acknowledged the justice of their calamities, but, remembering the mercies of God toward his people in former ages, he was emboldened to seek his merciful interposition, more especially requesting that the king's heart might be disposed to favour and assist him in the plan which he had designed to improve their wretched condition. So great was the distress of Nehemiah, that it appeared in the gloom of his countenance as he waited on the king, which Artaxerxes perceived, and graciously inquired the cause. Nehemiah informed him that he sorrowed over the desolate condition of Jerusalem; then, being encouraged by the king's favour, and lifting up his heart in secret prayer to heaven, he poured forth his wishes into the listening monarch's ear; he solicited leave to go and build and fortify Jerusalem. This was by no means a slight request; Artaxerxes, had he reflected upon the renown the Jews had gained for deeds of arms in past times, might have supposed that their city being rebuilt and fortified, they would revolt and become formidable foes to his empire. But he had no such suspicions, his heart, in answer to Nehemiah's prayer, was inclined to favor

them; he granted the good man's request, and with a full commission and attended by the king's guards, he left the palace and undertook the wearisome and dangerous journey "to seek the welfare of the children of Israel."

Much had been done under Zerubbabel and Ezra, but much still remained undone; the walls which they had erected were demolished, and they were exposed to the incursions of hostile neighbours. To this work, Nehemiah, as soon as he had arrived, applied himself with the utmost ardour; lest his designs should be frustrated he carefully surveyed the city by night, after which he assembled the priests and rulers, and declared his purpose and the object of his commission, exhorting them to second his endeavours by their mutual aid. His speech revived the courage and hopes of his brethren; *they* also longed to enclose the sacred site once more with walls, and they joyfully and unanimously exclaimed, "Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work."

Thus far Nehemiah was encouraged in his good designs, but he had to undergo the severest opposition, for when his designs were made known in Judea, powerful enemies arose against him. They did not, it is true, use open violence to stop the progress of the building; this the king's commission prevented; they did, however, all they could, they endeavoured to stop the work by reproach and ridicule, and these are powerful weapons against human nature. Many have stood in the face of danger undaunted, who have nevertheless been conquered by the shafts of ridicule, but not so was Nehemiah; he, declaring that the God of heaven was his support, heeded not their words, and though the opposition increased in violence, and though they heaped upon him a mixture of contempt and indignation, he only replied by prayer, and by committing his cause to God.

But far different was the conduct of his countrymen; dispirited by the persecution, which had now assumed the form of a conspiracy, and by excess of fatigue, they declined the prosecution of the work. This was a source of grief to

Nehemiah, but he still remained undaunted. By his prudent and pious conduct he baffled his adversaries, and by his animated address raised the drooping spirits of his countrymen. They went to work again with one hand, while in the other they held a weapon, and so incessantly did they labour that they put not off their clothes for sleep.

But the efforts of Nehemiah in the fortification of the city received another check; the people were involved in the severest calamities. Having been constantly engaged in the building since the commencement under Zerubbabel, they had not been able to cultivate their lands, and the natural consequence was that they suffered from famine. So great was this calamity, that they were under the necessity of mortgaging their lands and houses, and even of selling their beloved offspring to their richer brethren, for provisions and the payment of the king's tribute. This caused a mutiny, which might have been fatal in its consequences but for the timely interference of Nehemiah; their complaint, and more especially the cause of it, deeply distressed him, but notwithstanding the power of their oppressors he set himself to redress their wrongs; he rebuked them for their oppressive and usurious conduct. "We after our ability," said he "have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us?" To this they could make no reply, and Nehemiah, taking advantage of their confusion, advised them to restore to their oppressed brethren all which they had exacted, and to promise by solemn covenant never to renew the extortion, to which they agreed, and praised God, and did according to their promise.

To enforce his admonitions and good precepts the more, Nehemiah set them a noble example; unlike his predecessors, he did not exact the daily revenue of forty shekels of silver and the cost of his table, but remitted them and all other advantages which might be a burden to the community. He moreover refused the allowance due to

as governor, and not only supported his own domestics, but kept open house for one hundred and fifty Jews with their rulers who were engaged in the work besides strangers, without any hope or desire of recompense, save that which cometh from God.

But Nehemiah had to undergo still further opposition; foes without, and traitors within the city, combined to seek his destruction. Many were the stratagems to which they had recourse to effect his destruction, or to terrify him into an abandonment of the work. Under the mask of friendship they sent to invite him into the plains below, but he discovering their treacherous design, replied, that his work was too important to admit of the least delay. Four times they made this attempt, and as often failed; they then openly charged him with the intention of stirring up sedition and of renouncing his allegiance to Artaxerxes, and this charge having proved abortive, they contrived another scheme to betray him. They hired a false prophet, who, feigning a revelation from heaven, advised the governor to take refuge in the temple that he might preserve his threatened life. This was to draw him into a distrust of his God, for which they would afterwards have reproached him; but they were again disappointed, and he was again triumphant; in full dependence upon his God who had so often protected him, he replied, "Should such a man as I flee? . . . I will not go in."

At length in fifty-two days the wall was enclosed and the gates shut up, which so affected their opponents, that they concluded (and rightly so) that so great a work could not have been effected but by the assistance of Divine providence. "They were much cast down in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God." But Nehemiah's concern did not end with the completion of the fortifications, nor was it merely political, his bosom burned with ardour for their religious welfare. No sooner was the external defence completed, than he commenced its internal regulations, and he began his one grand object, that of reforming his countrymen and

establishing the worship of Almighty God; with Ezra the scribe, he caused the Scriptures to be publicly read, the fruits of which were immediately seen; the people confessed and lamented their guilt. Ezra, however, and his assistants, comforted them, telling them that it was not a time to mourn and weep, but to be cheerful and charitable to the poor, for whom nothing was provided, since it was a day holy to the Lord. The celebration of the sacred festivals was then renewed, and a solemn fast instituted, which was observed by all the people; they appeared before God with marks of unfeigned repentance, acknowledged their iniquities and implored the Divine favour, after which they entered into an engagement by covenant, that they would walk in the law of the Lord which was given by Moses. Nehemiah also provided for the better defence of the city by promoting the increase of its inhabitants; he ordered that, besides the rulers and those who offered themselves freely, every tenth person should be chosen by lot out of the rest of the people to reside there. These necessary regulations being concluded, the walls erected with so much labour were dedicated to God amidst loud acclamations of joy and praise.

Having thus settled the affairs of his country, Nehemiah, according to the promise which he had given to the king, returned to the court at Babylon. He had not, however, remained long there, before his presence was again required at Jerusalem, whither he obtained leave of the king again to repair. With the knowledge of all the terrible calamities which had overtaken their forefathers for their crimes, calamities from which they themselves were not yet exempt, the Jews profited not. Their nature and their sins were the same; they relapsed into their old corruptions, and grew very irregular. Through the treachery of Eliashib, the chief priest, Tobiah, one of the most noted opposers of God and his people, had apartments prepared for him in the temple, to the exclusion of the holy vessels and offerings, the profanation of that sacred place; and the hinderance of Divine worship. This so

inflamed good Nehemiah's zeal, that he was resolved to put an end to these irregularities. The first step he took towards this reformation was, to convince the people of their error by causing the book of the law to be read publicly. Herein he found that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever, because they met not the children of Israel with refreshments of bread and water, when they came out of Egypt, but hired Balaam to curse them, though God turned their curse into a blessing. Having by this convinced the people of their transgression, and seeing their readiness to reform, by departing from the mixed multitude, he boldly cast out Tobiah from his possessions, notwithstanding his high connexions, reprehended the rulers for their desertion of the temple, and restored the Levites to their office and tithes.

The next grievance the pious governor had to redress was, the desecration of the Sabbath. During his absence the Jews had not only done all manner of servile work on this day, but had suffered the Tyrians to bring their merchandise for sale, in contempt of an express commandment. This Nehemiah protested against in the warmest strains, setting before them the evils that this sin had brought, in former times, upon Israel; and which would, if persisted in, be brought upon them also. But he was not satisfied with making his protest against this evil. He was resolved to reform the practice; and he therefore commanded that the city gates should be closed on the evening before the Sabbath, and that they should not be opened till the Sabbath was past. That this might be duly observed, he appointed some of his own servants to guard the gates, and to see that no burden passed through. Thus, with great care and difficulty, this good man once more established Divine worship at Jerusalem; through his pious exertions,

Once more the voice of joy and praise,
Harmonious was heard around,
Once more to heaven, ascended lays,
Unmingled with an earthly sound.

Notwithstanding the great pains that had been taken by Ezra and Nehemiah to prevent intermarriages with the heathen, the fatal custom again became prevalent. Here, again, Nehemiah interposed; he censured, warned, and punished the offenders, regardless of their rank or office; and after effectually separating them from their profane connexions, compelled them to enter into covenant that they should never be renewed. Then, praying to God to do justice on those that defiled the priesthood, and violated the covenant between the priests and Levites, and the Lord, he proceeded to purge the temple from all profanation of strangers, and to appoint to the priest and Levite their several duties, setting out the wood for the offerings, and preserving the first fruits.

With this relation, the history of Nehemiah concludes; and a very instructive history it is. It teaches us not to stop short in our endeavours to benefit our fellow man, to embrace in our philanthropy eternity as well as time, to seek in all we do the glorification of our Creator, and to labour with disinterested motives. Throughout his whole conduct Nehemiah displayed a uniform abhorrence of evil, and a zealous concern for God's glory, regardless of his own interest, and of the sufferings he endured for the temporal and spiritual welfare of his countrymen; and so pure were his motives, that he could appeal to the Searcher of hearts to test his sincerity; and could look upwards for the Divine approbation upon his actions. May we so live that we may do the same. And, yet if we should, after all, we must cry as Nehemiah did, in the consciousness of possessing a fallen nature, "Spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy."

ESTHER.

She comes, though death may be her meed,
 Glowing with fervour holy ;
 She comes, her country's cause to plead,
 With accents meek and lowly.

Her spouse, her king sits on his throne,
 Mute stands the queen before him ;
 He marks her, and his glances own
 The power her love has o'er him.

He holds the golden sceptre out,
 And Esther draweth to him ;
 That gentle smile, it quelleth doubt,—
 Now let her accents woo him.

And he is wooed, and he is won,
 Won by most righteous bribe ;
 Wrongs are redressed, and justice done,
 Mordecai and his tribe.

And theirs are victory and light,
 Nor bondage more, nor sadness ;
 Esther has fought the holy fight,
 And all is joy and gladness.—J. W. D.

Flourished about A. M. 3540.

ALTHOUGH the Almighty may, in the order of his providence, permit the wicked to triumph, and the righteous to suffer, it is but for a season. He invariably turneth the rejoicing of the one into mourning, by heaping their wickedness upon their own heads, and the sorrow of the other into notes of gladness, by delivering them out of all their troubles. This truth receives a beautiful illustration from the Scripture narrative which bears the name of Esther ; a narrative which is held by the Jews in peculiar veneration. So far, indeed, does that veneration extend, that they call it Megillah Esther, "the volume of Esther,"

and sometimes "the volume" by way of eminence. They say, moreover, that it is equal in importance with the law of Moses, and that when all other Scripture shall cease, the book of Esther shall be lasting as the Pentateuch, which shall neither be destroyed or lost. Their veneration for this book doubtless arises from the important matter it contains relative to a particular deliverance their forefathers experienced under the reign of Ahasuerus, or that Artaxerxes Longimanus from whom Ezra and Nehemiah received their several commissions; and also from their gratitude to Esther, who was the principal instrument in effecting that deliverance.

For this great purpose Esther was raised from the depths of obscurity, and exalted to the highest station in Persia. And her exaltation was brought about in so wonderful a manner, that the directing hand of an overruling Providence is plainly traced in the event. Ahasuerus gave a sumptuous entertainment, and sent for his queen Vashti to grace the banquet. This mandate was contrary to oriental notions, and therefore the queen refused to obey; but the monarch being inflamed with wine, was enraged at her refusal, and consulted with his company what steps he should take to punish her for her disobedience. The courtiers imagining it would be more judicious to inflame than to allay his resentment, represented her conduct as likely to have the worst effects upon society at large, and advised, as a prevention, that she should be discarded from his presence. Their advice was listened to; and Esther, an orphan Jewess, who possessed peculiar gracefulness and beauty, being brought in with many others, in order that the king might choose another consort, so pleased the king that she was made queen of Persia.

The elevation to such a station as this would have made some minds lofty and imperious, and unmindful of their former connexions; but it had no such effects upon the mind of Esther. She had been brought up under the care of her cousin Mordecai, to whom she had paid the obedience due to a parent; and this attention to her kinsman

was paid while at court; she did nothing but by his commandment. Esther did not, it is true, seek the advancement of her kinsman, but this was in obedience to Mordecai, who advised her to conceal the knowledge of her kindred from her consort. What his motives were for giving such advice we are not informed; it is not, however, improbable that he imagined such a disclosure would have prejudiced the mind of the king against his new partner, on account of her relation to her despised countrymen. But whatever it might be, it hindered not his advancement. In the office which he held at the gate of the palace, he rendered such service to the king, as paved the way to future preferment. He saved the life of Ahasuerus, by discovering and disclosing a plot which had been laid against it by two discontented courtiers.

Soon after these events, Haman, a descendant of the Amalekites, was made prime minister of Persia, and his ascendancy over the mind of Ahasuerus was so great, that he not only obtained the government of the empire, but a royal edict for all persons to do him homage. All obeyed this mandate save one, and that was Mordecai, and he alone dared to disobey. Not that he did so from a factious spirit; it was doubtless some scruple of conscience that operated upon his upright mind,—either the profanity of the minister, or the kind of veneration he demanded, or that he belonged to that race whom God had pronounced accursed, and had ordered to be extirpated. Whatever it might be, Haman could not brook such treatment from an inferior. When he discovered it, “he was full of wrath,” and immediately determined to take revenge, and that of the most ample, unjust, and sanguinary nature. For this one man’s offence he sought the destruction of his whole race; thus displaying the ancient enmity of the Amalekite towards Israel. With all the superstition of an idolater, Haman caused lots to be cast from day to day, and from month to month, in order to determine the month and the day most propitious for the barbarous undertaking, or most calamitous to the Jews. These, as he imagined, being discovered, he ventured to propose the measure to

the king, alleging that they were dangerous to the state, and, strange to relate, without giving any proof of his assertion, he obtained a decree to destroy them without regard either to age, or sex, or character.

If we wanted a proof of the depravity of the human heart, we need only look upon these men whom Providence had placed over a mighty empire, after they had doomed a nation to perish, indulging themselves, without compunction, in the pleasures of the table ; drowning, as it were, their cries in the intoxicating draught. Yes, Ahasuerus and his minister, after this instrument was signed, made themselves merry with wine. But if they were merry, not so were the Jews. In *their* dwellings the utmost consternation prevailed ; and Mordecai expressed the anguish of his heart by all external signs of sorrow, and by his loud and bitter cries throughout the city.

The report of his sorrows was carried to the queen, and she sent a messenger to him with change of apparel, and to inquire into the cause of his grief. When informed, her concern for the fate of her beloved nation equalled that of her kinsman.

Tear answered tear, and sigh for sigh
Flowed freely from the riven heart,
And mingled prayer went up on high,
Though uttered in the flesh apart.

Mordecai charged Esther to exert all her influence with the king on their behalf ; nor was she less anxious to do so. But there was one formidable obstacle in her path : the Persian laws forbade every person, not excepting the queen, on pain of death, to approach the sovereign without his mandate, which Esther, by her messenger, represented to Mordecai. He replied, that herself, as well as her people, was involved in the ruin ; that she must perish as well as her nation ; he also remarked, that if she refused to mediate, deliverance might arise from another quarter for the Jews in general, while herself and her kindred might perish : and he encouraged her to hope that her exaltation had been appointed by Heaven, as the

means of deliverance. This brought her to a resolution of pleading in behalf of her nation, though her life might be the cost ; but she depended not on her ascendancy with the king, or her own skill ; she clothed herself in sackcloth, and fasted and prayed for success, as did all the Jews in Shushan, for three days. At the end of that time Esther ventured, uncalled, into the presence of the king ; and her joy must have been great indeed, to see him extend towards her the sceptre of peace ; and he not only received her thus, but anticipating something extraordinary must have been the occasion of her appearance, he freely offered her whatever she might ask, even to the half of his dominions. She requested that himself and Haman would come to a banquet she had prepared for them ; and this being complied with, she again solicited their attendance at another banquet on the morrow.

This honour elated Haman in the highest degree ; he hastened homewards, and collecting his friends together, boasted of the peculiar favour ; and yet amidst all this honour and all this pleasure, one thing mortified him : "All this," said he, "availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." His offended pride marred all his glory ; at the advice of his friends, however, he determined that this disrespectful Jew should trouble him no more ; he resolved now, that he should die before his countrymen ; and he ordered a gallows, fifty feet high, to be erected, that he might be executed thereon.

The fate of Mordecai seemed, at this moment, inevitable ; but man designs, and God defeats his schemes. While the proud minister was felicitating himself on the death of this good man, God was bringing about the exaltation of Mordecai, and the destruction of his foe. On that night, Ahasuerus, without any visible cause of disturbance, could not sleep, and in that unquiet state, he commanded the records of the kingdom, (in which was registered, according to oriental custom, both ancient and modern, all passing events, and all the king's own words,)

to be read before him : and it so happened that Mordecai's discovery of the conspiracy was related. The king inquired what reward had been bestowed upon him, and being answered none, he resolved instantly to atone for his neglect. Haman was then in waiting for an audience, to petition that Mordecai might die the death he had prepared, and the king sent for him, and interrogated him, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" Imagining from the former favours he had received, that he himself was that man, he was lavish in his advice. The royal apparel was to be put upon the favoured person, the king's own crown to be set upon his head, and he was to ride upon the king's own horse. Thus arrayed he was to be conducted by one of the noblest princes of the realm, who was to herald him through the streets of the city proclaiming, "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour." His advice was approved of, and to his utter consternation, he received a command to bestow these distinctions upon the man whose death he meditated ; and to attend him as his servant. However unwelcome the task, the mandate was obeyed ; and Haman afterwards returned home, and related his disgrace to his wife and friends.

But Haman's punishment was not to end in disgrace alone ; in the midst of his distress he was summoned to accompany the king to the queen's banquet. Thither he accordingly repaired, and Esther being again desired by the king to prefer her request to him, remonstrated in the most pathetic terms against the cruel edict gone forth, and earnestly besought that she and her people might be saved. The king, who it appears had forgotten the circumstance, demanded who had projected their ruin, and on being informed that it was his favourite Haman, he arose from the banquet in wrath, and went out into the garden.

When the kings of Persia rise abruptly, and withdraw, it is a signal of death to the offender. This Haman knew ; and seeing nothing but ruin before him, he fell on the

couch on which Esther reclined, and supplicated her intercession on his behalf; while in this posture, the king returned, and supposing he offered insult to the queen, and being informed of his further wickedness, in preparing a gallows for the execution of Mordecai, he ordered him to be hanged thereon. Thus did this wicked man fall into the net which he had laid for others, and his honours and estates were transferred to the man whose death he sought.

But the sanguinary decree still remained in force; for no law of Persia might be revoked. Nevertheless, at Esther's request, another edict was issued, to counteract its mischievous effects, by which the Jews were empowered to arm themselves in their own defence, and to slay all those who might attack them. The influence of this was so great, that numbers came to their assistance, so that when the appointed day arrived, those who arose against them were easily conquered. Seventy-five thousand were slain, among whom were Haman's ten sons.

To commemorate this providential deliverance, the Jews, to the present day, observe a yearly festival, called the feast of Purim, when the book of Esther is read from beginning to end, and when all, of every sex and age, are required to be present, for the better preservation of the memory of the important deliverance which it records. Important indeed it was, not only to the Jews, but to ourselves. Had the evil designs of the ambitious Haman been carried into effect, the church of God had perished; but such an event as this we need not fear. It has been, is now, and ever will be, under his protection, and "no weapon formed against it shall prosper."

Though potent foes enraged combine
To desecrate her hallowed shrine,
The fair Eclecta's spires shall rise
Tow'ring towards her native skies,
And man unto her courts repair,
To join in hallowed song or prayer,
Till all the rage of foes is o'er,
Till time itself be known no more.
Nor yet shall then her glories cease;
Her numerous offspring then in peace,

And joy, and harmony, and love,
 Shall tenant her blest courts above,
 Beneath the smiles of God, secure,
 While endless ages shall endure :
 For know, God's church is still the same,
 Be it of earthly or of heavenly name.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

The last and greatest herald of heaven's King,
 Girt with rough skins, hies to the deserts wild ;
 Among that savage brood the woods forth bring,
 Which he more harmless found than man, and mild.
 His food was locusts, and what there doth spring,
 With honey that from virgin hives distilled ;
 Parched body, hollow eyes, some uncouth thing
 Made him appear, long since from earth exiled.
 There burst he forth—All ye whose hopes rely
 On God, with me amidst these deserts mourn :
 Repent, repent, and from old errors turn.
 Who listen'd to his voice ? obeyed his cry ?
 Only the echoes which he made relent,
 Rung from their flinty caves, " Repent, repent."
DRUMMOND.

BEHEADED, A. D. 31.

THE moral condition of man was desolate indeed. In the Jewish church, the priest and the people had generally sunk, either into Sadducean infidelity, or Pharisaic superstition ; and the whole Gentile world still bowed the knee to their gods of wood and stone. But it was not to remain so for ever : when this worse than Egyptian darkness appeared to be established on the earth, the day of human redemption was drawing nigh. "The sun of righteousness" was soon to "arise with healing in his wings." The great Creator was about to recover his creatures from their fallen state ; to perform the covenant he had made with them, by sending his only Son to redeem them. This was

indicated by the appearance of John the Baptist, of whom the prophets had spoken, as the harbinger who should prepare the way before the Messiah.

The birth of this eminent man was attended with miraculous circumstances, in which God not only denoted his omnipotence, but excited the minds of men to expect something extraordinary from such preternatural means. His father was Zacharias, "a priest of the course of Abia," and his mother Elisabeth, "of the daughters of Aaron." These, amidst the gross darkness which surrounded them, were sincere worshippers; for it is said of them, that "they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." But it has been well remarked, "they who stand highest in the favour of God, may, during the greater part of their lives, want the external and visible marks of it, and lie under the burden of reproach among men." Thus it was with these two pious persons. They had no child, and being far advanced in years, had neither reason to hope for, or to expect any. Yet, notwithstanding the seeming improbabilities of nature, God had determined to make them instruments of his glory, by causing them to be the joyful parents of a child, second to none of the great ones of the earth; for, saith our Saviour, "Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."

Zacharias was officiating in his course, and burning incense in the temple, when a messenger from heaven appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar, the sight of whom filled his mind with terror. This the angel perceived, and in order to dispel his fears, he assured him of the favour he and his wife had found with God, who intended to bless them with a son, whose birth should be an occasion of great joy, not only to themselves, but to others. The angel foretold also the dignity of his office: he was, from his birth, to be inspired with the Holy Ghost, and was to go forth "in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the

disobedient to the wisdom of the just ; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Although a descendant of Abraham, the good Zacharias had not the faith of that patriarch. When he considered the age of himself and wife, the promise, though given by an angel visible at the altar of God, was too great for belief. He had the temerity to ask for a sign by which he should be certified of the truth of the prediction, and his demand was complied with. The angel, to confirm his authority, replied, that he should be dumb till all these things were fulfilled. This immediately happened, and he continued in that state until the day that the promised child was circumcised. On that day, however, his tongue was again loosened ; and, filled with the Holy Ghost, he celebrated the praises of God in a sublime hymn of joy, for remembering his holy covenant.

Of the early years of the Baptist very little is recorded. We read only that "the child grew, and waxed strong in the Spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." In this solitude he led an austere life, living upon locusts and wild honey, and spending his time in contemplation and prayer. A garment of camels' hair covered his frame, and a leathern cincture was girded about his waist. Thus he continued till he was about thirty years of age, when he received his commission to enter into the busy world, and to preach repentance to mankind.

At this time there was a great expectation that an extraordinary person was to arise for the redemption of Israel. We do not wonder, therefore, that his appearance, his contempt of the world, his mortified countenance and deportment, his austere and eremitical life, and his ardent zeal, when he first came forth, excited general attention. Multitudes thronged from all parts to hear the joyful news of salvation from his lips. Cities and towns were unpeopled, while the spacious fields were crowded with their inhabitants. "There went out to him all Jerusalem, Judea, and all the region round about Jordan." And so effective

was his preaching, so suited were the terms he used to every man's condition, that numbers of all classes of society, "were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins."

But the Baptist did not suffer them to depart with the impression that by this ceremony their guilt was purged away: he taught that he was not the Christ; that he only baptized with water, while the Messiah who should come after him should baptize "with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Thus was John employed by the river Jordan, when Jesus, who had taken his leave of his mother, and had begun his heavenly Father's work, came himself to seek baptism at his hands. The Baptist, who had no previous knowledge of his form, as soon as he beheld him, inspired by the Holy Ghost, paid him reverence: "I have need to be baptized of thee," said he, "and comest thou to me?" But, upon Jesus replying that it was necessary he should do so, since he was come "to fulfil all righteousness," he no longer disputed his Lord's commands, but baptized him.

The Baptist was followed by men of all ranks, sects, and parties, and his fame spread far and near. But he was not lifted up in heart; no, he was still the same humble preacher as when he first commenced his labours. Thus, when the members of the Jewish Sanhedrim sent a deputation to ask him who he was, he did not make a boast of his high office, but simply replied that, he was not the Messiah; and it was only by repeated questions, as to his pretensions, that they drew from him his character; and then it was not in boasting language, but in the language of one of the clearest predictions of Holy Writ, he pointed them to the Messiah, of whom he was the fore-runner. "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." Such a declaration ought to have had the effect of making them admire his humility, and of causing them to seek to learn of him concerning the glorious personage he pointed out to them. But no; they, Pharisee like, when they found that their questions answered not the end they had in view, censured him for assuming a com-

mission to which they imagined he had no right. "Why baptisest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" This reproach only elicited from him an explanation of his institution, as a preparatory rite to the baptism wherewith the Messiah should baptize. The Messiah was, indeed, the chief object to which he directed the attention of both the priest, the Levite, and the people. He was anxiously solicitous to lead them from himself to him, as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

Nor was it these alone whom he wished to follow Christ. His own disciples, between whom and himself there was, doubtless, a fond attachment, were directed by him to Jesus. "The next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God;" and they immediately left their master and followed Jesus. This was what the Baptist intended. He sought not popularity; the due discharge of his office was his only aim, and this done, he was content to be forgotten. This may be seen from the conversation he had with some of his disciples who, jealous of his honour, expressed a degree of envy at the growing fame of Jesus: "Rabbi," said they, "he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." This display of an envious spirit evidently gave him great uneasiness; he might also feel hurt that they had profited so little by his instructions; but he displayed no angry tempers in his reply; he expressed joy at the intelligence, and endeavoured to correct their false notions of Jesus, by bearing his testimony, in explicit language, to his Divine nature and mediatorial office: "Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all: he

that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth ; he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth, and no man receiveth his testimony."

In the second year of his preaching, the mission of the Baptist was brought to a close, and his end was such as became his life ; and the messenger of a suffering Redeemer. Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, had often heard him with pleasure, and had been moved by his discourses to do many laudable deeds ; but, at length, his faithfulness in reproving that monarch, for living unlawfully with his brother Philip's wife, offended him, and he threw him into prison. To be deprived of the privilege of pointing sinners to the Lamb of God must have been a great trial to the holy Baptist ; still he was not wholly unemployed ; his own disciples had access to him in his dreary abode, and he spent his time in establishing them in that faith for which he was persecuted. This we may infer from the message he sent on one occasion by two of his disciples to Jesus. For their instruction he bade them go and inquire whether he was "He that should come," or whether they were to "look for another." Our Lord understood the meaning of his message, and carried on the same plan of instructing them ; while it would appear he was only delivering a message to their master. He appealed to his miracles as evidences of his mission, since they had been minutely foretold by the prophets : "Go your way," said he, "and tell John what things ye have seen and heard ; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

These were grateful tidings to the Baptist ; tidings which, dark and gloomy as his dungeon was, rendered it more cheerful than the palace of Herod. With him all was calm, all tranquil, all joy ; while with Herod, in the midst of gaiety and grandeur, all was wretchedness. So true it is, that with the righteous there is inward joy, in the midst

of persecution ; while with the wicked there is no peace, even in the midst of the most dazzling display of human grandeur.

It would appear that Herod only intended to keep the Baptist in close confinement, and perhaps he might meditate his future release ; but he was no more to have liberty on earth, nor was he long to be immured in the walls of a prison. The holy man had an implacable enemy in Herodias, the guilty and abandoned partner of Herod ; she was an enemy indeed, whose revenge could not be satisfied with aught beside his death : this she ardently sought, and an opportunity soon presented itself for her to obtain her sanguinary desire. Herod kept his birthday, in great pomp and splendour : he made a great supper for his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee, on which festive occasion, the dancing of Salome, the daughter of Herodias by her lawful husband, so pleased him, that he promised with an oath, to give her whatsoever she should ask. The damsel hastened to her mother, to inform her of the promise given her, and, instructed by her, returned and demanded the head of John the Baptist in a charger. At this inhuman request, Herod was greatly troubled ; but he had not the courage to resist the demand ; he was very sorry, nevertheless, for his oath's sake, and them that sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her ; and he immediately sent an executioner, who beheaded John in the prison. Thus, rather than break a rash vow, made under the influence of the fatal cup, he consented to commit a crime, at which his nature recoiled with horror ; and in which the ruin of his immortal soul, infinitely more precious than all the kingdoms of the earth, was involved. The head of the Baptist was brought to the palace, and, in the presence of the assembled guests, given to the damsel, who, lost to all sense of delicate feeling, carried it to her cruel and revengeful mother. His body was laid in the grave by a few weeping and attached friends ; but where was his spirit ? While his foes were exulting, and his friends

were mourning over his death, that had taken its happy flight, had winged its way from earth to heaven, where no persecutor seeks for the life of the servants of God.

Where now he sings of battles won,
Of garments rolled in blood,
Of vanquished hosts, by David's son,
The bleeding Lamb of God !

Of blood that loosed the captive's chain,
Redeemed his life, and sealed
The record of a deathless name,
That lives in heaven, revealed.—ANON.

JESUS CHRIST.

The law of God exact he shall fulfil
 Both by obedience and by love, though Love
 Alone fulfil the law ; thy punishment
 He shall endure, by coming in the flesh
 To a reproachful life, and cursed death ;
 Proclaiming life to all who shall believe
 In his redemption ; and that his obedience,
 Imputed, becomes theirs by faith ; his merits
 To save them, not their own, though legal, works.
 For this he shall live hated, be blasphemed,
 Seized on by force, judged, and to death condemned
 A shameful and accursed, nailed to the cross
 By his own nation ; slain for bringing life :
 But to the cross he nails thy enemies,
 The law that is against thee, and the sins
 Of all mankind, with him there crucified,
 Never to hurt them more who rightly trust
 In this his satisfaction ; so he dies,
 But soon revives ; death over him no power
 Shall long usurp ; ere the third dawning light
 Return, the stars of morn shall see him rise
 Out of his grave
 Then to the heaven of heavens he shall ascend
 With victory, triumphing through the air
 Over his foes and thine ; there shall surprise
 The Serpent, prince of air, and drag in chains
 Through all his realm, and there confounded leave ;
 Then enter into glory, and resume
 His seat at God's right hand, exalted high
 Above all names in heaven.—MILTON.

BORN, A. M. 4004. CRUCIFIED, A. D. 33.

THE incarnation of Jesus Christ is the most astonishing
 event that has ever taken place in the world, and may
 well excite our admiration and gratitude ; compared with
 this, the birth of the most celebrated of the great ones of
 the earth, be they poet, or statesman, or conqueror, sinks
 into insignificance. *Their* births indeed are not otherwise

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interesting than as the commencement of a life which subsequent actions rendered great, but the birth of Jesus is remarkable as displaying a union of the divine and human nature: in him we behold, "God manifest in the flesh." This is, as the apostle terms it, a great mystery, but great as it is, such an incarnation was necessary for the great work which he came to accomplish; man had sinned, and no created being, not even the holiest and highest among the hierarchies in heaven, could expiate his sin or raise him from his fallen state. This God knew; and he "so loved the world," that notwithstanding their rebellions, "he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Oh what a scale of miracles is here,
Its lowest round high planted in the skies;
Its towering summit lost beyond the thought
Of man or angel!—YOUNG.

The apostle John gives the Messiah the appellation of Logos, which signifies the word, or reason; and it is remarkable that this was in exact accordance with the sentiments of the Jewish church in which the word, the Son of God and Jehovah means the same. Heathen philosophers also affixed a similar idea to the word Logos, sometimes using it as significant of the Creator of the world, and at others "as the most perfect idea, conception or model which God had formed of everything in his own mind, and of which He stamped the signature on his works."

As soon as the offence came, the promise of a Saviour was given; this the patriarchs had treasured up, and had deposited as a sacred trust for their descendants. It was reiterated from Heaven again and again to different persons, was shadowed forth by the ceremonial rites, and was the grand theme of the sweet singer of Israel and of all the prophets; the minds of men were therefore prepared for this great event. There was, indeed, at the birth of the Redeemer a general expectation that some extraordinary person was about to appear. But alas! while the few

who knew God "waited for the consolation of Israel," who should save the world from their spiritual thralldom; the multitude who knew him not, under the influence of a worldly spirit, looked only for a mighty potentate who should save them from temporal calamities.

Six months after the angel Gabriel had appeared to Zacharias, he was sent to a city of Galilee to an obscure virgin named Mary, who was of the house of David, with the wonderful tidings that she was the honoured person chosen to bear the promised Messiah. When he entered the apartment where she resided, he addressed her in these words: "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." Such a salutation from such a being put Mary into a great perturbation of spirit; but the angel removed her fears and explained his words by telling her that she was the happiest woman upon earth, inasmuch as she had found such favour with God as to be elected of him to conceive, and bring forth that great Person, whose name was on earth to be called Jesus, but who in heaven was known by the name of the Son of God Most High. When the pious virgin heard this she modestly desired him to explain how such an event could come to pass, seeing she was unacquainted with man. The angel replied that it should be accomplished by the power of the Holy Ghost, and to confirm her faith he made known unto her that her cousin Elisabeth had "conceived a son in her old age," and that it was "the sixth month with her, who was called barren." On receiving this information the doubts of Mary were overcome, and she replied to the angel in words expressive of her faith and resignation.

Soon after this, Mary went to the city where Zacharias and Elisabeth resided; on her arrival there she saluted her cousin, and she had no sooner spoken than the babe in the womb of Elisabeth leaped as transported with joy, and the holy woman divinely inspired, returned the salutation in the words of the angel: "Blessed art thou among women," and gave her the title of "the Mother of my Lord." Her words, uttered as they were by express

revelation, exalted the faith of Mary beyond every doubt, and she expressed her joy in that sublime hymn which we repeat sabbath after sabbath in the house of God.

Mary, after abiding with Elisabeth for three months returned home, when Joseph, to whom she had been betrothed, began to make preparations for their nuptials. Before, however, that event happened, he discovered that his intended bride was already with child, which circumstance greatly troubled him; but he was unwilling to make a public example of her by exposing her to the Jewish law, which was severe upon women in that condition, and therefore he meditated putting her away privately, as though she had never been his betrothed. But while he was resolving upon these things in his own mind, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, warning him against the measure devised, explaining the nature of the conception, and commanding him to take her home. Convinced of the reality of the vision, Joseph acceded to the Divine command; he took unto him his wife as the angel of the Lord had bidden him.

The prophets had foretold that the birth-place of the Messiah should take place at Bethlehem, but Joseph and Mary resided at a considerable distance from that place; the prediction however could not fail, Divine providence overruled circumstances which compelled them to remove thither. The treasury of Augustus Cæsar being exhausted, he issued a mandate that all his subjects, including the inhabitants of conquered nations as well as the Romans over whom he swayed the sceptre, should be enrolled in order that he might raise a revenue by a general taxation. This made it necessary for Joseph and Mary to repair to Bethlehem, that being the city of their tribe, and while here the Saviour was born.

An extraordinary incident attended this wonderful event; on that night, while some shepherds kept their flocks on those very plains where David formerly tended his sheep, and had tuned his harp to swell the high praises of his Redeemer, a choir of angels appeared to them de-

claring the "tidings of great joy," that a Saviour was born in the city of David, who was Christ the Lord. Then mentioning the place where he was to be found, and giving them a sign by which he should be known, they joined in singing "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," and ascended again to the realms of glory.

As soon as the celestial choir had departed, the shepherds went in quest of the babe, and found him where the angels had said, cradled in a manger. And is this babe Immanuel, this the Messiah who is to save the world? While the proud reject him for his mean appearance and deep humility, the contrite sinner replies,

It is, it is, and I adore
 This stranger meek and lowly,
 As saints and seraphs bow before
 The throne of God most holy.
 Faith through the veil of flesh can see
 The face of thy divinity,
 My Lord, my God, my Saviour.—MONTGOMERY.

When the shepherds had seen the child, they made known abroad to all the particulars of the vision with which they had been favoured, and the triumphant song of the angels; "and all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them." After this the shepherds returned home praising God for his condescension in revealing to them so great an event.

As our Lord came to fulfil all righteousness, he was circumcised on the eighth day, when he received the name of Jesus according to the word of the angel. After this the service of Mary's purification being ended, he was presented in the temple, when either a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons was offered as a sacrifice, according to the requirements of the law. On this occasion two extraordinary incidents occurred, well calculated to confirm their faith. In Jerusalem there was one Simeon, venerable on account of his great age, his prophetic spirit, his virtue, and his piety; this good man had lived long in the expectation of seeing the Messiah, for God had so

favoured him as to give him an assurance that he should not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ. Guided by the influence of the Spirit he entered into the temple, and without any previous knowledge of the child he took him up in his arms and blessed God for granting him a sight of his salvation, expressing his readiness now to quit the world, and prophesying that the child should be a light to the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel. Anna also, a prophetess of the tribe of Aser, under the influence of the same spirit that indited the words of Simeon, "spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

But it was not to the Jews only that the birth of Christ was revealed; the Gentiles were to be partakers of his grace; hence notice was given of it to certain wise men of the East, where an opinion had long prevailed that one was to be born, who should be the universal monarch of the world. These came to Jerusalem inquiring where they might find the new-born king of the Jews, and declaring that they had seen "his star in the East," and were come "to worship him." What this star was which the magi saw, has been a matter of dispute, some of the ancients imagine that it was the Holy Spirit, others say that it was an angel; some suppose that it was a new star in the firmament, some a comet, and others that it was a luminous appearance in the air, while another concludes that it was the light that shone round the angels who appeared to the shepherds. Whatever it might be, the thing signified by it, and the course the magi were to pursue, were it appears, explained to them by revelation.

The report of this errand of the wise men reached Herod, who then sat upon the throne, and he was greatly troubled thereby: it gave him such uneasiness, that he resolved to put the child to death. Concealing, however, his designs, he called the chief priests and scribes of the people together, and demanded of them where Christ should be born. Being informed that prophecy spake of Bethlehem as the place, he sent for the wise men, and learning of them what time the star

appeared, that he might be enabled to ascertain the age of the child, he sent them to Bethlehem, charging them, when they had found the object of their search, to return and tell him, that he might go thither and worship him also. The magi, having received these instructions, departed by themselves, still under the guidance of the star, which went before them, till they came to Bethlehem. Here, to their great joy, it stood over the house in which Jesus was; and they entered, and fell down before him with the utmost reverence, presenting unto him gifts of "gold, and frankincense, and myrrh." But though Herod's designs were concealed from the eye of man, they were not so from the eye of God. He foresaw the tyrant's future cruelty, and he therefore warned the magi in a dream not to comply with his request, and they returned into their own country by another route. Joseph also was warned of God in a dream, to depart with the mother and the child into Egypt; and they had no sooner done so, than Herod, pretending that he was mocked by the wise men, to make sure that the infant should die, sent his soldiers to slay all the children in Bethlehem, of "two years old and under." Soon after this the tyrant died, and the angel again appeared to Joseph, and directed him to return home; but discovering that his son reigned in his stead, he went and dwelt at Nazareth: this was so ordered, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene." Here, "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him."

When our Saviour had arrived at the age of twelve years, he went up to the feast of the passover at Jerusalem, with his parents. And when they had fulfilled the days of sacrifice, they returned, while the child Jesus tarried behind, unknown to them. They had already proceeded onwards a day's journey ere they missed him; when they discovered his absence, they were alarmed, and in deep anxiety returned to seek him; and on the third day of their search, they found him sitting in the

midst of the learned doctors in the temple, hearing them and asking them questions with such a depth of wisdom, as astonished all who heard him. His mother, when she discovered him, chid him for the uneasiness he had given them. He replied in these mysterious words, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Nevertheless, he returned with them, and till he was thirty years of age was subject unto them, working with his reputed father at his occupation, which was that of a carpenter.

This is all that the Holy Spirit has revealed to us concerning the private life of our Lord. His Divine nature, during this period, seems to have been veiled, but it was now to be displayed. John, his forerunner, had commenced his ministry, and was baptizing in Jordan, and to this place Jesus repaired to receive the sacred rite. And when he ascended out of the water, "the heavens were opened unto him, and the Spirit of God descended like a dove and lighted upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" Thus was the Divinity of our Lord declared by an audible voice from heaven, and by the visible presence of the Holy Spirit surrounding his head in a glorious body of light, and with the tremulous motion of a dove; and thus was he consecrated to his ministerial office, "by baptism and the Holy Ghost, as the Jewish priests were by washing and anointing."

Jesus was now entered on the great work of effecting man's redemption, and he was first called upon to endure a conflict with the great enemy of God and man. On his return from Jordan, "he was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil." In this solitary place he was miraculously supported, like Moses the lawgiver, and Elias the restorer of that law, without food for forty days. At the end of that time, his human nature failed him, he was very hungry. This was the time when the tempter commenced his attack: he urged him, if he was the Son of God, to prove himself such, by changing the

stones that lay around him into bread, for the supply of his wants; but here his artifice failed. Though Jesus could have provided himself with food in this way, he nevertheless submitted to the ordinary course of Providence, that his obedience might in no case be wanting. The devil, finding that he could not tempt him to distrust Providence, next endeavoured to persuade him into an act of presumption. To this end, he took him into the Holy City, and setting him on the battlements of the temple, directed him to cast himself down, quoting a passage in the Psalms, which he inferred, left no room for a doubt of his safety in so doing. But Jesus again foiled the tempter, by quoting another passage, which declares, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." From the temple, Jesus was conveyed to the top of a high mountain, where Satan again attacked him by the most dangerous temptation he could devise, that of ambition. He showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, (probably, as some have supposed, by vision,) at the same time assuring him, he would give all to him, if he would fall down and worship him. Moved with indignation at so blasphemous and horrid a suggestion, Jesus answered, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."

And to their Lord, now musing in his thought,
 A heavenly volley of light angels flew,
 And from his Father, him a banquet brought
 Through the fine element: for well they knew,
 After his Lenten fast he hungry grew;
 And as he fed, the holy quires combine
 To sing a hymn of the celestial Trine,
 All thought to pass, and each, was past all thought divine.

The birds' sweet notes to sonnet out their joys,
 Attenuated to the lays angelical;
 And to the birds, the winds attune their noise,
 And to the winds the waters hoarsely call,
 And echo back again revoiced all,
 That the whole valley rung with victory.—GILES FLETCHER.

Thus was our Lord tempted in all points, yet without sin, that he might become a faithful and merciful High Priest, who can succour his people, when they, like him, are tempted : and that we might be encouraged by his example to resist the devil, taking for our defence the same weapon he did, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." After this trial was ended, Jesus commenced his public labours by collecting a few disciples, the first of whom were Peter, Andrew, and John the Evangelist, and in a short time the number was increased to twelve. But they were all taken from the lowest occupations, most of them being fishermen ; God seeing fit to pass by the rich, the powerful, and the learned, that his work might not appear to be of human skill, but of his own immediate operation. With this slender retinue of followers did Jesus carry on his public ministration ; but though his appearance was lowly, the wonders that he wrought, proclaimed him more than mortal. Many were the miracles he wrought in confirmation of his mission : the first of these was at Cana in Galilee, where at a marriage feast he turned water into wine ; not to encourage idle revelry and licentiousness,—that, so holy and so pure a Being could never do,—but to sanctify a holy institution.

From Cana, Jesus went with his disciples to Capernaum, and thence to the passover at Jerusalem, when he drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and poured out the changers' money, and overturned their tables. This was a great action, and it is remarkable, that the persons in fault offered no resistance, but fled from his presence, leaving their merchandise behind them. It was probably conscious guilt that restrained them, or it may be the wonderful things that Jesus wrought, made them afraid to resist his power.

During the whole of this passover, our Saviour wrought many miracles, probably to engage the attention of the people ; nor did they fail to do so. On the minds of many, they made a strong impression, and they believed

in him as the Messiah ; but the rulers and Pharisees were not of this number ; they, generally speaking, were offended at him, and could not believe that any good thing could come out of Nazareth. There was, however, one happy exception ; Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrim, was of too upright a mind to condemn either the person or doctrine of Jesus, without inquiry into the matter, and for this purpose, unwilling yet to expose himself to the resentment of his brethren, he came to Jesus by night. Our Saviour, though he perceived his weakness, gave him a cordial reception, and immediately began a conversation, the grand theme of which was the regeneration of man, a subject in which it was of the utmost importance he should be informed ; and so convincing were his arguments, that Nicodemus was converted, and from that time he became his disciple. He had, indeed, the singular boldness to stand up afterwards for his defence in the council, and with Joseph of Arimathea he paid him the honours of a funeral, when all his bosom friends "forsook him and fled."

Some time after this conference with Nicodemus, our Saviour and his disciples went into that part of Judea remote from Jerusalem, where they baptized. After this, he proceeded to Galilee ; and on his way thither, being fatigued, he sat down by the side of a well, near Sychar, a city of Samaria, while his disciples went into the city to purchase food. As he rested there, a woman of Samaria came thither with a pitcher to draw water, and Jesus solicited some to quench his thirst. There being at that time great enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans, his request naturally surprised the woman. This she freely expressed, and in doing so, gave our Lord an occasion of showing the greatness of his condescension and benevolence. "If thou knewest," he replied, "the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink ; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Thus, under the image of living or springing water, by the side of which he was

sitting, he beautifully described the efficacy of the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, of which whosoever drinketh shall never thirst. The woman expressed her desire of partaking of the streams he named, but it was not from a heartfelt conviction of its importance. She was, indeed, still ignorant of the meaning of our Saviour's words. This he knew; and, to convince her of his omniscience, he commanded her to fetch her husband; and when she replied that she had no husband, he told her that she had said truly, for that she had had five husbands, but that he with whom she was now living was not her husband. The woman, hearing such a particular account of herself, from the lips of a stranger, was astonished, and came at once to the conclusion, that he was a prophet; and she, therefore, with much deference, put a question to him on a subject long agitated between the Jews and Samaritans: whether men ought to worship at Jerusalem or at Mount Gerizim. The preference was given to Jerusalem; but he told her that the time was fast approaching, when the ceremonial observances, both at Jerusalem and Gerizim, must cease; and when men should worship God, who is a spirit, and requires the worship of the heart, by a purer service; "in spirit and in truth." This led to a conversation on the Messiah, in which the woman acknowledged that he was to arise among the Jews, but expressed her belief that at his coming, he would instruct, not only the Jew, but the Samaritan in all things. Upon hearing her express such correct notions of himself, our Saviour, as though he would intimate his willingness to do as she had said, immediately replied, "I that speak unto thee am he."

Thus far had Jesus proceeded in his conversation when his disciples returned; who, when they saw how he was engaged, wondered at his condescension in talking with and instructing a woman of Samaria. They, however, maintained their silence on the subject, and proceeded to set before their master the provision they had brought, but he heeded it not, and, when reminded of it, he

replied, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Meaning the satisfaction he was about to receive, in the conversion of the Samaritans. For it was not only this woman of that nation that was to receive instruction from his lips. Invited by *her*, numbers came out to see him; and, at their earnest invitation, he abode with them two days, during which time many were converted. This we learn from the declaration made by them to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

After Jesus had finished his work in that city, he proceeded to Galilee. Here, at the city of Nazareth, the place where he was educated, he was held in contempt, as the son of Joseph the carpenter; and when, on the Sabbath day, as he was teaching in the synagogue, he faithfully reproved them for their wilful blindness; regardless of the sanctity of the day, they gathered round him, simultaneously forced him out of the city, and dragged him to the brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, intending to cast him down headlong; but he miraculously "passed through the midst of them, and went his way."

But he was not thus treated by the rest of the Galileans. They, it is said, received him gladly, and he took up his abode at Capernaum, a town situated northward from Nazareth, on the borders of Zabulon and Naphtali. In so doing, he fulfilled a prophecy of Isaiah, which says, "The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephtalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." Thus the countries round the lake, but especially Galilee, became the scene of our Saviour's public life, and Capernaum his ordinary residence; to which latter place he first directed his attention. Here he preached the kingdom of God which was now commenced, (the office of John having expired,) and his word was

attended with such energy and power as astonished all who heard him.

Some time after his arrival at Capernaum, intending to make a larger circuit than ordinary, he collected all his disciples, who till now had only occasionally attended him, that they might accompany him in his journey. The evangelists, however, have not informed us how long he spent in this tour ; nor have they given a minute account of his transactions. They merely state that he went about all Galilee, (that is, Upper and Lower Galilee,) teaching in their synagogues every where, and preaching the doctrine of the kingdom ; that he wrought miracles on persons afflicted with all kinds of diseases, the report of which drew numbers from Galilee, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan ; adding that his fame spread throughout all Syria.

On the multitude who followed him, our Saviour looked with compassion. Pitying their ignorance, he seemed to be anxious to give them particular instruction. For this purpose he went up into a mountain, and sitting down on an eminence, he inculcated many important points of religion, contrary to the general opinions then held, and which, but for his previous miracles, would probably have been but ill received. Coupled with these, however, they had the most pleasing effects : "The people were astonished at his doctrine." This discourse is handed down to us, and is known by the appellation of "The Sermon on the Mount."

Immediately after delivering this sermon, he performed the cure of a leper. This man, prostrating himself before him, conscious of his ability to heal, implored his aid : "Sir," said he, "if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus stretched out his hand, and touched him, saying, I will ; be thou clean." After which he bade him go and show himself to the priest, and make the oblation prescribed by Moses, for notifying the cure to the people ; a matter of the utmost consequence to the man, since he was excluded from all communication with society, till the priest had given his testimony that he was pure.

Our Saviour now again proceeded to Capernaum, when, as he was entering the town, a Roman centurion met him, entreating his aid, on behalf of a servant, who was afflicted with palsy. Jesus signified his intention of coming to heal him, but the centurion, not thinking himself worthy of the honour, requested him, in language of the deepest humility and faith, to speak the word, and his servant would be healed. He did as he requested, and expressing his surprise at the Gentile's faith, he took the occasion to declare the merciful purpose of God toward the Gentile as well as the Jew.

On the Sabbath following, Jesus taught in the synagogue. Here he performed a miracle of healing, on one of the congregation, who was possessed of an evil spirit; and going from thence to Simon's house, by a touch of his hand, he cured that disciple's mother of a fever under which she was labouring. The fame of these miracles soon spread through the town, and after the day of rest was ended, which, according to the Jewish form, was at sun setting, they brought the sick in great numbers, fully persuaded that he would heal them. Nor were they disappointed: he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

The crowds which his fame had brought together in Capernaum were so great that they began to be troublesome. Jesus, therefore, rising early in the morning, retired to a solitary place, for the purposes of prayer and meditation. The inhabitants, however, unwilling to be deprived of his presence, followed him, and entreated him that he would not leave them. To this he replied that he must, for the fulfilment of his mission, preach the gospel to other cities also; and, conformably to this declaration, he visited the next towns, taught in their synagogues, and healed the afflicted.

The sermons which Jesus had preached in this tour, seem to have made a deep impression upon the people, for they either accompanied him to Capernaum, or went thither soon after his return, in great numbers; which

disposition he encouraged. He went out to the lake, and taught them, standing upon the shore: and when the crowd became too numerous, that he could not continue his discourse, he went into Simon's boat, and preached to them from thence. The subject of this discourse is not mentioned. The evangelist seems only to introduce the transaction because it was connected with a miracle; this was the miraculous draught of fishes, which was caught at his command, after his disciples had toiled all night, and had taken nothing; and which was intended to show his disciples, and Peter in particular, the success of their future preaching, when little success was to be expected.

A short time after this event, the sea of Tiberias became the scene of another of our Lord's miracles. Finding himself incommoded by the numbers that followed him, he directed his disciples to steer to the other side of the lake. As they sailed along, Jesus fell asleep, and soon after a storm arose, which threatened their destruction. The disciples exerted their utmost skill, in managing the vessel, but it seemed all to no purpose; they gave themselves up for lost. But when on the brink of perishing, they ran to Jesus, crying out, "Master, Master, we perish." Their cries awoke him, and

Awful he rose,
Rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea,
Peace, be thou still; and straight there was a calm.—GRAHAM.

This display of power over the elements, was succeeded by a miracle which displayed the extent of his empire over the powers of darkness. When he and his disciples had landed, there came from the tombs, (which were caves dug out of rocks or mountains) two men possessed with devils, exceedingly fierce. His disciples were alarmed at their appearance, but Jesus dispelled their fears, for, while yet at a distance, he commanded them to come out of them. At his word the men fell down before him, and the demons, after requesting that they might enter into a herd of swine, came forth; and the herd of swine immediately ran down a steep place into the lake, and perished in the

waters. This might have been permitted to make trial of the disposition of the Gadarenes, to see whether they would be more affected with the loss of their swine, than with the recovery of the men, and the doctrine he taught; and, if so, it was soon discovered. They were so alarmed at the incident, that they requested him to leave their country; and he again embarked, and returned to the other side of the lake, where he remained a few days, instructing a multitude there waiting to receive him; after which, he entered into his own city of Capernaum.

No sooner was it known that he had arrived there, than a multitude gathered round Peter's house, the ordinary place of his residence, to hear his words. Among the rest were some Pharisees and teachers of the law, who, on the report of his miracles, had come from all quarters to witness them, and judge of his pretensions. Determined to leave them without excuse, he embraced an opportunity which now offered itself, to exert his power on behalf of one, afflicted with palsy. This man being let down from the roof, on account of the multitude without, Jesus, seeing the faith of those who were engaged in the transaction, declared aloud that the sins of the paralytic were forgiven. The Pharisees in their hearts accused him of blasphemy; but Jesus replied to their thoughts in language which discovered that he assumed not too high a character: "What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house." The cure was effected, and the Pharisees were obliged to pronounce it a wonderful event; thus glorifying God by unwillingly confirming the mission of his Son; the multitude bore their willing testimony in strains of admiration, and the restored sang praises to God.

The next remarkable incident in our Saviour's history was the call of Levi or Matthew. This man was a pu'

can, or tax-gatherer, and was sitting at the office appointed for the receipt of customs, when he received the command, "Follow me," and he immediately forsook his lucrative employment to become *his* follower who had not where to lay his head. It was probably about this time that our Lord performed the celebrated miracle at the pool of Bethesda; this was on a poor impotent man who had long lain there without any one to assist him into the pool, when the water, troubled by an angel, possessed healing virtues. Jesus saw him in this pitiable state, and knowing that he had been long ill, inquired whether he would be healed? and upon his replying that he had no one to lend him a friendly hand in time to receive a cure, he bade him take up his couch and walk, and he was immediately healed. This was on the Sabbath-day, and on the same day our Saviour passed through the corn fields near Jerusalem with his disciples. In this walk he was followed by a crowd, among whom were some Pharisees; these men on perceiving his disciples pluck some ears of corn, complained to him that they had broken the Sabbath; our Lord, however, repelled the accusation by reminding them of what David did, who, though a prophet as well as king, in a case of necessity, took the sacred bread contrary to the law, and by further reminding them of the priests who killed the sacrifices on the Sabbath-day. He desired them also to consider that passage in Moses wherein God declares that he has greater pleasure in mercy than sacrifice, and explained the end of the Sabbath, as instituted, not for the detriment, but for the benefit of the human race. But though our Saviour had thus repelled this accusation of the Pharisees, they still sought to defame his reputation with the people by charging him with committing unlawful acts on the Sabbath-day. Thus on the next Sabbath-day, when in the temple they saw his intention of healing a man with a withered hand, they asked him publicly, whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day? That he might expose their malice and superstition, he appealed to the dictates of their own minds whether it

was lawful to do good or evil on the Sabbath-day, to save life or to destroy? and receiving no reply, he said to the man: "Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other." This, however, could neither conquer the malice or the unbelief of the Pharisees, for they instantly went forth and took counsel with the Herodians to put him to death, but as his time was not yet come, and as it was no part of his mission to resist their power, he withdrew to the sea, whither he was followed by numbers from all parts of Judea, from Idumea, Phœnicia, and Syria.

The calumnies with which the Pharisees persecuted our Saviour, though of the most malicious nature, betrayed him not into anger nor made him desist from his labours of love; on the contrary, he seemed the more ardent to promote the interest and salvation of man, for he immediately left Capernaum and "went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people."

On his return home he was again attended by great multitudes anxious to receive instruction; so great indeed were their numbers, so neglected were they by their teachers, and so ardently did they long for the word of life, that Jesus was moved with compassion towards them. Accordingly he directed his disciples to pray to "the Lord of the harvest," that he would "send forth labourers into his harvest." He spent the night in prayer, and early in the morning he called his disciples together, and chose twelve whom he named apostles, that is, "persons sent out," that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, endowed with power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils; and after he had carefully instructed them in the duties of their mission, they went forth as fellow-workers with him.

The day after our Saviour had given them instructions he travelled with them, and many of his disciples, as far as

the entrance of the city of Nain, a town situated a mile or two south of Tabor. At this place he met a funeral procession ; it was the corpse of the only son of a widow, now left disconsolate. Full of compassion for the afflicted one, Jesus affectionately addressed her, bidding her refrain from weeping, and at the same time he touched the bier and bade the youth arise; the mandate was obeyed. This was a noble confirmation of our Lord's mission, and such the inhabitants of Nain considered it. "There came a fear on all : and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us ; and, That God hath visited his people."

The call of Matthew has been noticed before; we have now to observe that soon after, he made a splendid entertainment for his Master, to which he invited as many of his own class as he could, hoping no doubt that they might be led by our Saviour's discourses to repent. At this the Pharisees were offended, and they censured his conduct by asking his disciples, Why it was their master ate with publicans and sinners? Their discourse was not directed to Jesus, but he meekly replied, by reminding them that the sick only, need a physician, intimating that since the Pharisees thought themselves righteous, they needed not his company, whereas the publicans who were sinners had the greatest need of it; and he further, declared that he came expressly to call sinners to repentance.

Some of the followers of John the Baptist now came to him, inquiring why his disciples neglected to fast? a duty which both they and the Pharisees performed. He replied, "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?" meaning that all fasting should cease in the days of the Messiah, when there should be only good days, and days of gladness, a truth which the Pharisees themselves admitted.

At this entertainment also, while Jesus was reasoning in defence of his disciples, Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue,

in the utmost distress, came and fell down before him, entreating him to come and cure his daughter who was at the point of death. He had no sooner made the application, than Jesus arose from table and went with him. As he was going, attended by a vast concourse eager to behold the miracle, a woman who had been afflicted with a flux twelve years, and who had sought a cure in vain, came behind him and laid hold of the hem of his garment in faith, and was healed. Jesus, sensible of some divine emanation, turned round and asked who touched him? All looked with indifference upon the question save one, and that was the poor woman, and she, fearing her presumption had carried her too far, came trembling, and at his feet declared what had happened to her; but he bade her not fear, telling her that her cure was the effect of her faith, and she was dismissed in peace. In the mean time a messenger came and acquainted the ruler that his daughter was no more; this was doubtless afflicting news to the parent, but Jesus bade him take comfort, assuring him his daughter would be made whole. When he came to the house he suffered no one to go in with him, save Peter, and James, and John, and with these he repaired to an upper-room where the damsel was. Here he found a number of people lamenting, as is the custom of the Jews, with music in the ante-chamber; these he commanded to depart, and with the father and mother, and his disciples as spectators only, he took the damsel by the hand and bade her arise, and she instantly arose as from sleep, the fame thereof going abroad into all the land.

Immediately after Jesus had left the ruler's house, he gave sight to two blind men who had been induced to seek relief at his hands from the reports they had heard of his miracles, and when he returned home he restored a dumb demoniac to the use of his speech. This latter miracle exposed him to the malice of the Pharisees, who charged him with casting out devils by means of the prince of the devils, whom they named Beelzebub, the most odious name they could find for that wicked spirit,

being the name of the god of Ekron, whom the Jews held in universal detestation.

About this time, after reproving the Pharisees, Jesus denounced the most awful judgments against Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, cities which had been so often blessed with his presence, and the inhabitants of which had so often witnessed his wonderful deeds and heard his words, and yet were so obstinate as to continue in their sins. Few indeed, though they were astonished at what they saw and heard, embraced his doctrine, and those that did, were of the common people. But this was ordained of God; had the rulers and the scribes been converted to the Gospel, and sent forth to preach the word, the Gentiles might have looked upon it in a political light. Our Lord, therefore, made the rejection of it by those men a matter of discourse at this time publicly. "I thank thee," said he, "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." When he had finished his discourse he was invited to the house of a Pharisee, whose name was Simon; here a woman of an abandoned character came, and placing herself at his feet, washed them with tears, wiped them with the hair of her head, and poured upon him an alabaster box of ointment, which filled the house with its odour. This act excited the attention of the guests, and Simon thought within himself that Jesus could not be a prophet, otherwise he would not suffer such a woman to approach him. But Jesus proved that he was more than a prophet, by replying to his thoughts; he apologized for the woman, by a parable of two debtors, to whom a greater and a lesser debt were respectively forgiven, from which Simon concluded that each would love his creditor in proportion to his mercy in cancelling his debts. In this parable he gave the reason of the woman's extraordinary love and grief, and for his not rejecting her. Then applying it, he reproached his host, by distinguishing between his and the woman's entertainment, and concluded by forgiving her sins.

About this time our Saviour healed a demoniac both blind and dumb. This extraordinary miracle, in which the noblest sense as well as the most useful faculty of the body was restored together, so astonished the multitude, that they acknowledged him the son of David, that is, the Messiah. The Pharisees, however, who had come down from Jerusalem, again maliciously affirmed that he performed it by the assistance of Beelzebub. In reply to this our Lord advanced two arguments in defence of his miracles; the one was derived from a proverb that a divided family or kingdom was soon destroyed, and the other was taken from the conduct of their own children who professed to cast out devils. After having vindicated his character and his miracles, he proceeded to show the extent of *their* guilt, who, contrary to conviction, ascribe those miracles to Satan which were wrought only by the Holy Spirit. This was followed by a debate with the scribes and Pharisees on the subject of a sign from heaven, which they requested him to give in proof of his Messiahship, and in which he replied, that they had no reason to expect any other than that of the prophet Jonas; for as the preservation of Jonas in the belly of the fish for three days, was a sign to the Ninevites of his mission; in like manner, Christ's resurrection from the dead, after having been left in the grave three days and three nights, should clearly demonstrate that he came from God. While thus debating, his mother and his brethren came to seek him, on which he stretched forth his hand to his disciples and said, "Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Meaning that he estimated obedience to God so highly, that he preferred the relation and union which it begat to him, to the strongest natural ties; a high commendation, and not reflection (as some may suppose) upon his mother, for she, without doubt, was one of that happy number.

The calumnies of the Pharisees it appears failed in intended effect, for his hearers became so numer

he was compelled to leave the house and go to the sea-shore to teach them, and because many were coming and going, he deemed it prudent to enter into a vessel. From thence at this time he taught in parables, concerning the mysteries of the kingdom of God; thus fulfilling the prophecy of the Psalmist, that he should open his mouth in parables. These parables were that of the lighted lamp, of the tares, of the seed that sprung up imperceptibly, of the leaven, the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price, the net which gathered of every kind, and the householder which brought forth things, new and old.

After our Lord had taken care to furnish the minds of his apostles with every useful instruction, after having twice heard the sermon on the mount, and having received the most explicit directions respecting their conduct in the ministry, and after they had, by his parables, been taught a variety of particulars concerning the kingdom of God, they were sent forth by pairs (not singly, lest they should faint) to preach the Gospel. In this we perceive, as indeed we may in all his actions, the wisdom of a God, blended with the meekness of the lowliest of the sons of men. The preaching of the twelve apostles and the miracles wrought by them raised the expectation of the people more than ever. The inhabitants of Galilee regarded him as superior to all the prophets, since he could not only work miracles himself, but impart the power to others. The fame of his power now reached the court of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, and gave rise to many speculations, among which, the most remarkable was that of Herod, who concluded that it was John the Baptist (whom he a short time before had put to death) risen from the grave.

It was about the time the apostles returned from their mission to give an account to their Master of their labours, that the disciples of the Baptist brought an account of his death. At this the apostles were thrown into the greatest consternation, and, whatever might be the motive of our Lord, he thought proper in his infinite wisdom to retire to Bethsaida, a town on the other side of the sea of Tiberias

under the government of Philip. Landing in the desert near this town he found a number already collected in expectation of hearing his word ; nor were they disappointed,—he instructed them in the truth and removed their diseases. At this time also he wrought a miracle for the whole multitude ; being in want of provisions, he caused them to sit down upon the grass in companies, and supplied their wants with five barley loaves and two small fishes, after which twelve baskets-full remained ; the number thus fed was five thousand, besides women and children. This was one of the most astonishing as well as one of the most convincing miracles our Lord performed, during the whole course of his ministry, The people who partook of this repast was naturally astonished, and in the height of their transport they proposed to take Jesus by force and make him a king, or in other words, constrain him at once openly to avow that he was the Messiah. But he, knowing their purpose and the inclination of his disciples to encourage them in that purpose, ordered the latter to sail for Bethsaida while he dismissed the multitude, after which he retired to a mountain and spent the evening in contemplation and prayer.

The disciples had been directed to sail for Bethsaida, but meeting with a contrary wind they were so tossed by the waves, that they could not proceed thither. In this state, in the beginning of the night, Jesus saw them from the mountain, toiling and rowing, and that he might teach them to rely in the greatest extremities on the good providence of God, he went to save them, walking on the sea. The disciples perceiving his approach, and imagining that they saw a spirit, cried out with alarm.

But when the voice of Jesus with the storm
Soft mingled : " It is I, be not afraid ;"
Fear fled, and joy, lightened from eye to eye.
Up he ascends, and from the rolling side
Surveys the tumult of the storm and sky
With transient look serene ; the tempest awed
Sinks to a sudden calm ; the clouds disperse,
The moon-beam trembles on the face divine
Reflected mildly on the unruffled deep.—GRAH

No sooner had he hushed the storm than the disciples found themselves safe at land, as Saint John relates, at Capernaum. On many occasions previous to this, Jesus had given equal, if not surpassing evidences of his power, but his disciples did not till now make open professions of his dignity; now, however, they confessed that he was "the Christ, the son of God."

Jesus had now been absent from Capernaum for some time, the people were glad therefore to see him return; they immediately sent messengers to all their friends in the country round about, who were sick, desiring them to come and be healed, and they were brought in such numbers that he could not pay attention to each individual case. They and their friends therefore, besought him that he would permit them to touch, if it were but the extremity of his garment, expressing themselves confident of a cure thereby; nor were they disappointed,—he permitted them, and as many as touched him were made perfectly whole. Shortly after this, the multitude whom he had fed in the wilderness came thither in search of Jesus; but to those who had sought him because of that miracle, he discoursed in a sermon which reprov'd the fleshly hearers of his word, and in which he declared himself to be the word of life to believers. This doctrine was so opposite to the disposition of those who heard, that many even of his professed disciples abandoned his cause. The evangelist Mark relates immediately after this, that he performed a multitude of cures in other towns and villages; this was probably in his journey to the passover, which Saint John says was nigh when the miracle of the loaves was performed.

After he had returned from the passover into Galilee, emissaries from the scribes and Pharisees at Jerusalem attacked him for permitting his disciples to eat with unwashen hands, contrary to the "tradition of the elders." Instead of entering into a defence of the conduct of his disciples, our Lord censured the practice of the Pharisees, charging them with making void the commandments of

God by their traditions, and having proved thereby the vanity of their worship, he directed his attention to the multitude, whom he taught that meat defileth not the man. This he afterwards explained to his disciples by telling them that the evils which proceed from the heart alone defile the mind; exhibiting thereby the true nature of human actions, and loading with infamy those teachers of religion who instruct in frivolous superstitions, while they neglect or oppose the commandments of God.

Though our Saviour sought not the favour of the Pharisees nor feared their resentment, yet, as their plots were levelled at his reputation and his life, and as his hour of suffering was not yet come, he thought proper to retire into Phœnicia, there to dwell for a time in a state of obscurity. His fame however had gone before him, and he soon met with those who knew him. One of the inhabitants of that country indulging the hope that he would display his mercy on behalf of her daughter, who was under the influence of an evil spirit, implored his aid: he replied, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs," thus marking the difference which still existed between the Jew and the Gentile. The woman nevertheless, convinced of his exalted character and mercy, continued her supplication, and said, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Jesus then, commending her faith, acceded to her request, and her daughter was cured. This miracle may be supposed to indicate that there was mercy in store for the Gentile.

At length Jesus departed from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and returned to the sea of Galilee through the regions of Decapolis, on the east of Jordan. Here they brought unto him one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, for whom his friends interceded, and Jesus taking him aside put his fingers into his ears, and touched his tongue, and that the man, who could not be instructed but by sight, might consider from whence all benefits proceeded, "and looking up to heaven, he

sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened."

And the last accents of the healing sentence
Rang in the ear which never heard before.—GRAHAM.

The afflicted spake and heard, and grateful for his recovery, he and his friends, notwithstanding the charge Jesus had given them to the contrary, published everywhere that he had done all things well.

Having tarried a considerable time in Decapolis, the fame of his being in that country brought multitudes from all parts, and to avoid the crowds, he again retired into solitude. The place of his retreat was a desert mountain, by the sea-side of Galilee; but he was again followed. The sick, the lame, the dumb, and the maimed, were brought to him from all quarters, and he healed them, insomuch that the Jew and the Gentile both marvelled, and glorified the God of Israel. This multitude continued with Jesus three days: at the end of which time, as on a former occasion, their provisions were spent, and lest they might faint on the road, a miracle was again wrought for their sustenance; with seven loaves and a few fishes, four thousand, beside women and children, were fed, and seven baskets were filled with the fragments. At this repast, the people were ordered to sit upon the ground, hence it has been supposed that it was summer, the grass in Judea decaying very early by reason of the heat of the climate. After the repast, Jesus took a boat, and passed over to the coasts of Magdala.

While in this country, the Pharisees having heard of the second miraculous dinner, and fearing that the common people would own him as Messiah, resolved to confute his pretensions publicly. To this end they joined with their rivals, the Sadducees, who readily united in persecuting him, and they came and demanded a sign from heaven; expecting that the prophecy of Daniel, wherein he speaks of the first public appearance of the Messiah, as coming in the clouds of heaven, would be fulfilled in a literal sense. These men craftily feigned a determination to

believe, if he would give them sufficient evidence of his mission. As however proofs sufficient had been given of his Divinity in his miracles, he complied not with their request, but having reproached them with possessing a better knowledge of approaching rain or sunshine, than of his advent, he repeated the sign of the prophet Jonas, and departed.

He now again crossed the lake and came to Bethsaida, where he cured a blind man. From thence he went north into the territory of Cæsarea Philippi; where, after he had prayed with his disciples, he inquired of them the general opinion men entertained of his character; and when they had told him that some said that he was John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets, he inquired their own individual opinion. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This title he accepted, but charged them that they should keep it a secret, as he was speedily to suffer death as an impostor, and to rise again on the third day. Peter hearing these mournful tidings, so contrary to his hopes and expectations, having hitherto learned only the doctrine of Christ's coming, rebuked him with mistaken zeal for the assertion. This led to a discourse, in which Jesus prepared them also to suffer for his sake, and spake of his coming in judgment, and which he concluded with a prophecy, that some were standing in his presence, who should not die, till they had seen "the Son of Man coming in his kingdom;" or, in other words, till they beheld a visible representation of the glory with which he should appear at the last day, and his power exercised on the men of that age. This they did, when they witnessed his transfiguration, resurrection, and ascension; when they had the miraculous gifts of the Spirit conferred upon them; and when they saw Jerusalem, with the Jewish state, destroyed, and the Gospel spread through the greatest part of the then known world.

About eight days after our Lord had

the title of the Messiah, he took Peter, and James, and John, and went up into a high mountain; where, while he was praying, he "was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." Thus did his Divinity burst forth through the veil of his human nature on earth, and, to heighten the grandeur of the scene, Moses and Elias appeared in all the beauty of immortality, to converse with him. The disciples were asleep when the scene first commenced, and when they awoke, they beheld their Master in all the majesty of his transfiguration. Peter, ever forward, proposed to build three tabernacles, one for Jesus, and one for each celestial visitant. "While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud: And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him." Jesus remained all night in the mountain, and next morning, as they were coming down, he charged his disciples not to publish what they had seen, till after his resurrection. When they had approached the plain, he saw the disciples he had left behind, surrounded by a great multitude and disputing with the scribes. It seems, that as the face of Moses shone after he had been with God on the Mount, so somewhat of the glory of the transfiguration was visible on our Lord's countenance and raiment; for when the people looked on him, they were greatly amazed, and ran to him to salute him with peculiar reverence. After the salutations were over, he exercised his power over a demoniac, which his disciples had, through a want of faith, vainly endeavoured to exorcise, and which would appear, from the narrative, to have been the subject of dispute between the disciples and the scribes.

From Cesarea Philippi, our Saviour went again to Galilee; here he kept himself as privately as possible, telling his disciples that the reason of his so doing was, that so little effect followed his labours, and that as he should shortly die by violence, he thought it not season-

able to do any more; adding, that after his resurrection from the grave, he should be more likely to be received and believed in by them.

Being now at Capernaum, at Peter's house, he was called upon to pay the tribute of half a shekel, or fifteen pence, either for the service of the temple, or for the Romans: and notwithstanding that all things in heaven, and earth, and sea belonged to him, that he might not give offence, he wrought a miracle to discharge the demand. He sent Peter with a line and a hook, telling him that in the mouth of the first fish he should take, he would find a Grecian coin called a stater, equal to one shekel of Jewish money, the sum required for both Peter and himself.

The grief the disciples felt in consequence of the intimation he had given of his sufferings, it would appear, was but transient. A few days only elapsed, before they disputed on the subject of the chief post in their master's kingdom. This, Jesus overheard, and though he was silent at the time, he afterwards took occasion to check their emulation. He placed a little child in the midst of them, and declared, that unless they were converted, and became meek as infants, they should not even enter his kingdom.

About this time, John informed his Master, that having seen one cast out devils in his name, he had forbidden him, since he was not his follower. This called for a reproof from Jesus, in which he argued that the man must be friendly to him and his cause, and in which he prohibited their forbidding any one to act for him, who was not against them; and warned them not to give offence to the faithful, concluding with a declaration, that he was come to "seek and to save that which was lost." At this time, also, he inculcated mutual forgiveness, illustrating his precepts by the parable of the two servants, debtors to one lord. After delivering this parable, our Lord went into Judea, travelling through that country which is on the other side of Jordan

he was followed by a great multitude, whom he taught, and for whom he wrought miracles. It has been supposed that he was now going to the feast of the passover, the fourth celebrated during his ministry, and the last from which he was to return unharmed.

No events are recorded from this time to the feast of tabernacles, a festival commencing on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, answering to the latter end of our September or the beginning of October. Thither he went privately, neither preaching nor performing miracles by the way, as heretofore. His non-appearance gave his enemies an opportunity to attack him with impunity; they charged him with being a deceiver, who neglected the commandment of Moses. At length, however, about the middle of the feast, Jesus came into the temple and preached many important doctrines, with such depth of wisdom, such clearness of method, and such eloquence, that even his enemies wondered. In the midst of his discourse, officers, sent by the council, came to apprehend him, but being struck with the topic on which he was discoursing, the energy with which he enforced his doctrine, and awed by the majesty of his appearance, they returned to them that sent them, declaring that, "never man spake like this man." It was on this occasion that Nicodemus spake in his defence in the council.

That evening Jesus retired to the Mount of Olives, but the next morning he returned and taught in the temple; and while thus employed, the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery, and, with an insidious intention, desired his opinion on the matter. But Jesus knew their designs, and declining the office of civil magistrate, as stoning was the punishment for the crime, according to the Mosaic law, he proposed that he who was sinless should cast the first stone. "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last." And Jesus being left alone, dismissed her, with a charge to sin no more. He then preached himself as

the light of the world, and, after replying to the Jews, who boasted of their descent from Abraham, which answer so enraged them, that they took up stones to stone him to death, he rendered himself invisible, and went out of the temple.

As our Saviour fled from the Jews, he met a man who was born blind ; and he was asked by his disciples, whether it was the man's own sin, (alluding to the opinion held among the Jews of a state of pre-existence,) or the sins of his parents, that caused this affliction. He told them that it was neither, but that the glory of God might be displayed in him ; and to demonstrate that he was the light of the world, he again affirmed it, and proved it by a miracle. Sitting down, he made clay of his spittle, and anointing the eyes of the blind man, bade him go and wash in the pool of Siloam. "He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing," to the surprise of all who had any knowledge of him. This cure was much talked of in Jerusalem, and the man himself and his parents were examined before the Pharisees, touching his blindness and the miracle ; and, finding that it could not be disproved, they called the man a second time, and after vainly endeavouring to lessen his benefactor in his esteem, by asserting that he was "not of God" who could do such things on the Sabbath-day, they excommunicated him ; but Jesus, meeting him, received him into his fold. He told him that he was the Christ, and the man became enlightened, believed on him, and paid the adoration due to the Messiah ; while the learned doctors still blasphemed, and remained in darkness.

The feast of dedication was now at hand. This was a solemnity, not appointed by the law of Moses, but by the restorer of the Jewish nation, Judas Maccabeus, in commemoration of his having cleansed the temple, and restored its worship, after its desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes. But though it was of human institution, and though Jesus foresaw further attempts would be made on his life at Jerusalem, he declared his intention of f

ther, and that publicly. His road to Jerusalem from Galilee, lay through Samaria, whither he sent messengers, with orders to find accommodation for him in some village; but as travellers professedly going to Jerusalem to worship, were the objects of the scorn of the Samaritans, they refused to receive him. When the messengers returned with this intelligence, James and John, incensed at their conduct, proposed to call down fire from heaven, as Elijah did of old; but this was not the temper of Jesus; for this unbecoming resentment he sharply reproved them, telling them that he came not to destroy, but to save the life of man; after which he went to another village.

The scene of the ministry of our Lord was henceforth to be in Judea, and in the country beyond Jordan. It was expedient, therefore, that his way should be prepared in every city and village whither he was to come; and, to this end, he chose seventy disciples, whom he might send forth to prepare his way, and preach. Their instructions were nearly the same as those delivered to the twelve, only he directed them not to spend their time in salutations on the road, the time assigned for their mission being limited. These, after having gone through several parts of the country, returned to their Master, and related, with joy, what they had done, and particularly, that devils were subject unto them. But Jesus diminished their exultation, by reminding them that they ought not to rejoice so much in this circumstance, as that their names were registered in heaven; and, once more, he thanked God for revealing his wisdom unto babes, and admonished his disciples that they were favoured above all kings and prophets gone before them.

It was about this time, that "a certain lawyer" came to try his judgment by one of the most important subjects it is possible for the human mind to examine: What man must do to inherit eternal life. Our Saviour, alluding to his profession, bade him recite the summary of the law of Moses, and, after he had done so, told him that the due performance of that was all that he required. The lawyer,

willing to justify himself, at least, in the social and relative duties, and imagining that it meant only his friends, inquired the meaning and extent of the word neighbour in the law; our Saviour, however, convinced him of his mistake, by the parable of the good Samaritan, which teaches us to regard as neighbours all persons who require our good offices.

In his way to Jerusalem, Jesus spent a night at Bethany, in the house of Martha and Mary, two pious women, sisters of Lazarus, on which occasion they displayed their natural dispositions; Martha taking pains for his accommodation, and Mary paying attention to his Divine instructions, for which the latter was commended, in terms which showed how necessary it is to attend to the one thing needful, the salvation of the immortal soul. When he arrived at Jerusalem, notwithstanding the obstinacy of the Jews, and the repeated instances of their malice, and prejudice against his doctrine, he continued to preach. Being in the outer court of the temple, near the sheep exposed to sale for sacrifice, in the language of the ancient prophets, who oft compared the teachers in their times to shepherds, and the people to sheep, he described the scribes and Pharisees as evil shepherds, who, in the time of danger, deserted their flocks; and he further declared that he himself was the door of the sheep, and the good shepherd, inasmuch as he was come to lay down his life for them. As he was walking in that part of the temple, which, to preserve the memory of the ancient edifice, was denominated Solomon's porch, the Jews came and requested that he would state explicitly, whether or not he was the Messiah. He replied that he had already told them by his works, but that since they were not his sheep they had refused to believe them; he then asserted his union with his Father, for which the Jews again prepared to stone him; "But he escaped out of their hands, and went away again beyond Jordan, the place where John at first baptized."

While in this country, our Lord prayed publ

such fervour, that one of his disciples, affected with the matter and manner of his petitions, entreated him to teach them to pray also ; he willingly embraced the opportunity, and, after repeating the discourse on prayer which he had formerly delivered in his sermon on the mount, he repeated also that brief formulary, denominated the Lord's Prayer, in which language he commanded them to pray. He then enforced the duty of constancy in prayer, by the example of one who submitted to the importunity of a friend, who called upon him at midnight for bread, and of an earthly parent, who cannot refuse his offspring aught that is for his real good.

Our Lord having again exercised his power over a demoniac, the Pharisees again attributed his influence to Satan, and he defended himself by a similar argument as on a former occasion. While thus reasoning with these wicked men, a woman, transported with his wisdom, uttered an exclamation upon the happiness of that woman who had the honour of giving him birth ; but all unmoved with praise he replied, in language which showed his deep humility, "Yea, rather," said he, "blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."

He was now invited to the house of a Pharisee, where he sat down to table without washing his hands, as all the other guests had done. This his host remarked, and expressed his surprise at the contempt cast upon their traditions, which led to the delivery of eight woes, in which the Pharisee, the scribe, and the lawyer were alike involved, as hypocrites, appearing outwardly fair, but within full of all uncleanness. Finding themselves thus reprov'd, they urged him with great vehemence, hoping that he might say something prejudicial to his cause, that they might accuse him, either before the Roman or Jewish governor ; but all their attempts were vain. A multitude having collected to hear his instructions, he took occasion to repeat the same injunctions publicly that he had uttered privately, bidding them beware of ambition and hypocrisy, and, to enforce his admonition, he reminded them of the

omniscience of God, to whom all hearts are known, and of the latter day, when all things should be brought to light.

A person in the crowd now requested him to persuade his brother to divide their inheritance with him, and to give him his share. As this was the province of the magistrate, and no part of his mission, he refused to interfere; knowing, however, that disputes of this kind often arose from covetousness, in one or both of the parties, he cautioned all to beware of this vice; and to show that the love of the world was foolish and dangerous, he related the parable of the rich glutton, which exhibits a short-lived gratification, ending in eternal death. He then exhorted his disciples to take no anxious thought for this life, but, having their hopes centered in heaven, to commit all their cares into their heavenly Father's hands; after which he commanded them, as the servants of the East, whose lamps were ever burning, and whose loins were ever girded, to be in constant readiness for the discharge of their duty, assuring them that if they did, their Master would not only receive them into his company, but gird himself, come forth, and serve them. On Peter inquiring whether this parable was addressed to the disciples or to the multitude, he instructed him further by the case of a servant, who, presuming upon the favour of his lord, neglected his duty and oppressed his fellow-servants, for which he was to be cut asunder, and to have his portion hereafter with unbelievers; then, resuming his prophetic character, he predicted the persecutions his disciples would have to endure, from violent dissensions and animosity, and that of their own kindred.

He was now informed of the murder of some Galileans, "whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices," implying that they must have been more than ordinarily wicked thus to suffer. Our Saviour, however, opposed this sentiment, and plainly told them that unless they also repented, they must perish; and to arouse them still more to a sense of danger, he uttered the parable of the barren fig tree, by which the Jewish nation was represented, in

the advantages they possessed, the sins they had committed, and the ruin which would overtake them unless they repented.

Our Saviour happening to preach in a synagogue at Perea on a Sabbath-day, a woman, who had not been able to stand upright for eighteen years excited his compassion, and he healed her. This action called forth the woman's gratitude to God, but not so did it work upon the ruler; he was filled with indignation, and renewed the question about the observance of the Sabbath, saying, that six days was sufficient for these offices of mercy, and that the Sabbath ought not to be thus violated. Jesus reproved him by an argument drawn from their own practice, that of loosing an ox from the stall, to lead him to the watering-place, on that sacred day.

After this, intending to go to Jerusalem, he passed through the towns and cities of Judea, enforcing those doctrines he had previously taught, adding new precepts and cautions, and advertising them of the multitudes that would be lost, and the comparative few that would be saved; this he did in order that they might strive earnestly to be of that happy number. The same day some Pharisees told him that if he was desirous of his safety, he should depart from that country, as Herod intended to slay him; but Jesus, who would not diminish his prophetic character and mission, betrayed no signs of fear, but boldly reprehended Herod publicly, and foretold that he should die at Jerusalem, intimating future woes to the Jews, in a pathetic lamentation for neglect of their day of visitation, and for slaying the prophets and messengers sent from God.

Our Lord was now invited to dine with a distinguished person among the Pharisees; at this feast, which was on the Sabbath-day, a man afflicted with dropsy was present, being probably introduced for the purpose of seeing whether Jesus would cure him; not receiving an answer to the question he put to them, concerning the lawfulness of doing good on the Sabbath-day, he put forth his hand and

healed him, and sent him away, reproving the Pharisees with the same argument with which he had silenced the ruler of the synagogue on a former occasion, to which argument none could reply. While at this feast our Saviour observing how anxious the Pharisees were to obtain the chief places at table, took occasion to expose the folly of their behaviour, and to inculcate humility as the surest method to command respect; he advised them also to bestow their liberality on the poor, rather than to entertain their richer brethren with costly feasts, assuring them that for so doing they would be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. At this time also, by the parable of the Great Supper, he represented that the Jews and afterward the Gentiles, should, by the Gospel dispensation, be invited to partake of the grace of God.

Going from thence he was attended from place to place by a great multitude, whom he exhorted to ponder seriously the trouble it might cost them to follow him faithfully; still, however, the publicans and sinners followed him, and he thereby incurred the indignation and contempt of the scribes and Pharisees, who charged him with being the friend of sinners. To vindicate his character, by the parable of the lost sheep, the lost piece of money, and the prodigal son, the latter of which abounds with tender passions and the most beautiful images, he taught the mercy of God to sinners, and the joy occasioned by one single conversion, among the inhabitants of heaven. He further instructed his disciples, by the parable of the unjust steward, in which the good things of this world are called the unrighteous mammon, because of their transitory nature, and are aptly contrasted with the true riches, the joys of heaven; this was intended to excite their minds to a wise improvement of their high advantages. But, excellent as these instructions were, the Pharisees treated them with derision, which brought upon them a severe reproof for their pride; after which Jesus repeated what he had before observed concerning the eagerness with which men entered the kingdom of God, the permanency

of the law, and the evil of their ill-grounded devices; and that nothing might be wanting to impress their minds with these awful truths, he related the parable of Dives' and Lazarus, a parable that teaches us that the great and renowned are nought with God, that man is immortal, that the wicked shall be punished, and the greatness of that punishment, that the state of man is unalterably fixed after death, and that if the evidences of a future state already proposed are not sufficient to convince man, extraordinary means, such as a visit of one from the abodes of the dead, would also fail. He now proceeded to instruct his disciples to avoid giving offence, to cultivate a forgiving temper, to entertain a just awe of the Divine authority, and a deep sense of the unworthiness of their most perfect actions.

The acquaintance of our Lord with the two pious sisters at Bethany has been already noticed; Lazarus their brother, a young man whom he regarded with the most tender attachment, was now taken dangerously ill, and a messenger was sent to inform him of the trying circumstance, in the hope that he would come and heal him. Purposing, however, to display his Divinity, to confirm his mission, and to glorify God, he deferred his visit till Lazarus was no more; after two days, therefore, he called his disciples to go with him to Judea, telling them that Lazarus was dead, but that he would go and raise him again to life. When he arrived at Bethany he found that Lazarus had been buried four days; here he met the mourning sisters, and after he had administered consolation to them, and had strengthened their faith in him, as the resurrection and the life to all that believe in him, he requested to be shown his grave. Over this grave, Jesus, the Lord of life and glory, wept. Here too, when he had commanded the stone to be removed which was laid at the door of the sepulchre, he addressed his heavenly Father in strains of adoration and thanksgiving, after which, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth," and he was instantly restored to life and to his friends. This miracle produced

the most important effects in the minds of the beholders. Struck with the proof of the Divine power and benevolence; many acknowledged him as the true Messiah; others, however, desirous of ingratiating themselves with the rulers, went and reported the deed to those at Jerusalem, and a council was called, in which it was deliberated what should be done to prevent his glorious works, and they resolved unanimously, with the exception of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, to put him to death.

It was probably in this journey to Jerusalem, that our Lord, passing through Samaria, was accosted by ten lepers, who cried, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Without seeming to treat them with much regard, he bade them go and show themselves to the priests, and as they were going they found themselves restored to health. One of these, a Samaritan, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and casting himself at the feet of his deliverer, gave thanks to God; not so, however, did the other nine; they continued their journey without displaying their sense of gratitude; but for this they were censured, while the poor stranger, who was a Samaritan, received a commendation of his faith from the lips of Jesus.

Our Saviour now resided in the little city of Ephraim; at this place the Pharisees pressed him with inquiries concerning the kingdom of God, of which they entertained erroneous notions; he informed them that it consisted, not in any form of government erected by arms, but in the submission of the will, and the conformity of the mind of man, to the law of God. He then addressed his disciples, and prophesied of the destruction of the Jewish state, whose constitution, civil and religious, was the chief obstacle to the erection of his kingdom; describing at the same time the peculiar circumstances of that nation when it should come to pass. After this he incited them to constancy in prayer, though the blessing for which they petitioned might be delayed, by the parable of the widow, who having long cried for justice at the hands of her judge, at length obtained her suit, through her impor-

tunities. He further instructed them in the proper spirit of prayer, by the parable of the Pharisee and the publican.

An incident now occurred which places the character of Jesus in a most amiable light; some persons having brought young children to him, that they might receive his blessing, were rebuked by the disciples for the liberty they had taken, and were denied access to him; Jesus was much displeased with their conduct, and commanded them not to forbid infants coming unto him, declaring that "of such is the kingdom of God;" then, taking them up in his arms, he "put his hands upon them and blessed them."

As he was going from thence, a young ruler possessed of great riches, pleasing manners, and high moral character, inquired of him what he must do to inherit eternal life? Jesus replied, that he must keep the commandments; and when asked which, (as none ever fulfilled or can fulfil perfectly those which contain our duty to God,) he repeated those which teach our duty to our neighbour, probably intimating that even these had an extent beyond his morality. The young man, however, asserted that he had kept them, and asked what yet was wanting; and Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." At these words the young man departed, exceedingly sorrowful. This led to a discourse, in which our Saviour taught the difficulty of a rich man's entering into the kingdom of heaven, and the happiness of all such, who, at any period, should forsake all and follow him; these truths he illustrated by the parable of the householder, who hired labourers at different hours of the day, and in the evening gave them all equal wages.

Some time after delivering this parable, Jesus proceeded on his journey, with an intention of celebrating the pass-over where he was to suffer that death, predicted both by himself and prophets; but the apostles understood not these things. This ignorance was discovered by an action

which likewise displayed the temper of mind and the motives which induced them to follow Christ; they fancied that by his resurrection after his sufferings, was meant his taking possession of the great empire they believed he was about to erect. James and John, therefore, when they heard him name his rising from the dead, made an application, through their mother, for the chief posts in his kingdom, and a seat for one on his right hand and the other on his left; perceiving their ambition, he taught them that they must suffer for his sake, and calling all his disciples around him, he exhorted them to avoid worldly ambition, setting his own self-denying obedience and humility before them as their example.

Our Saviour at length arrived at Jericho; here he met with two blind men, one of whom was Bartimeus, the son of Timeus; this poor beggar, hearing a crowd pass by, inquired the occasion of it, and being told that it was Jesus of Nazareth that passed by, he importuned so vehemently, that, notwithstanding the chidings of the multitude, Jesus called him, and, at his request, illumined the sightless eyes of himself and companion, assuring them that their faith had saved them, and they followed him glorifying God. This miracle excited general attention, and produced a favourable impression on the minds of the assembly. Another transaction of our Lord at this time also demands attention; a publican of great wealth and influence, who was of a diminutive stature, climbed into a tree to catch a glance of him as he passed by; him Jesus called down, telling him that he must on that day abide in his house; and delighted with his intention, Zaccheus made a public declaration of giving half of his goods to the poor, and of making restitution fourfold to any one from whom he had made an unjust exaction of the taxes; to which Jesus replied, "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

At this place, as his followers were accompanying him

to the royal city, in expectation that the kingdom of God would immediately appear, and with a full determination of assisting our Saviour in its erection, he related the parable of the nobleman's servants, who received every one a pound, wherein he showed them their duty, described the true nature of his kingdom, and taught that it was not to commence immediately. When he had finished this parable, he left the house of Zaccheus and proceeded to Jerusalem, going on before his disciples ;—thus exhibiting his willingness to undergo his future sufferings for the human race.

Our Saviour at length, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, and lodged in the house where Lazarus was, whom he had raised from the dead. While here, Mary out of affection for him anointed his feet with the costly ointment of spikenard, an action that raised the indignation of Judas; he was angry because his Master had not caused the ointment to be sold, that the produce might be given to the poor. This was his avowed reason, but his real motive was covetousness, for had it been sold, he, being the bearer of their common property, would have appropriated a portion to his own private use. It appears that the news of our Lord's arrival at Bethany, which was about two miles from Jerusalem, soon reached that city, and numbers came from thence to see himself and Lazarus, and when they had seen them, many were convinced of the truth of the resurrection, and believed in Jesus as the Messiah. Having supped and spent the evening in the company of Lazarus and his sisters, early the next morning he set forward to Jerusalem, which he intended to enter publicly as the Messiah; for this purpose he sent two of his disciples to the neighbouring village of Bethphage, with directions to take for his service an ass which they should find tied, and a colt with her, which had never been ridden by any one; this they were not to do by force, but if the owner remonstrated with them, they were to say it was his command. All this came to pass as Jesus said, and they were suffered by the owner to lead

them away; "and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon." And now the multitude be-thought themselves of showing him those honours which kings and conquerors obtained in their triumphal entries; some spread their garments in the way, others cut down branches and strewed them in the way, while some waved branches on high before him in demonstration of their joy. When the procession that attended him had reached the Mount of Olives, from whence the royal city might first be seen, he was met by a multitude from Jerusalem coming up the hill with palm branches, the symbol of peace, in their hands. At meeting, the latter first saluted their brethren, crying, "Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;" this salutation was answered by the former in transports of joy: "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest." Thus was the prophecy of Zacheriah fulfilled, which saith: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

As our Saviour drew nigh to the city he looked on it, and notwithstanding the injuries he had received there, and the pangs he was about to endure there, he wept over it, and lamented aloud the calamities which he foresaw were coming upon it, in the most pathetic language; fore-telling the principal circumstance of the siege of Jerusalem, with which the event minutely corresponded when Titus attacked the city. Having entered the city he proceeded to the temple, and after looking around upon all things it contained, he again retired to Bethany. In the morning, however, he returned, and as he was going along he happened to see a fig tree that looked green; to this he turned aside, hoping to find fruit thereon, but finding none, he said, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever," and immediately it began to wither away;—a fit emblem of the approaching ruin of the Jewish nation.

The Jews in the time of our Lord carried their disdain of the Gentiles so far, that they desecrated the outer court of the temple which was in the days of old allotted for proselytes, by using it as a market for everything necessary to sacrifice. This Jesus on this day reformed; he declared that the Gentiles worshipped there by Divine appointment as well as the Jews, it being a house of prayer for all nations, and that they had by their sinful traffic there, turned it into a den of thieves; he therefore purged the temple of these abominations, and none resisted his authority.

The opinion that Jesus was the Messiah seemed now very prevalent; while in the temple the lame and the blind, and other afflicted persons, were brought to him from all quarters, and he healed them, for which deeds the very children lauded him, proclaiming that he was the son of David. At this the chief priests and doctors of the law were offended; but fearing the multitude, they only asked him if he heard the children's words, intimating that it was his duty to silence them by refusing the praises they offered without understanding the meaning. Jesus replied to them by a passage from the Psalms, which doubtless refers to this transaction: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies." Hearing this they sought again how they might destroy him, but they feared the people, and when the evening was come he again retired with his disciples to Bethany.

As they returned again to Jerusalem the disciples could not help expressing their astonishment at beholding the fig tree which Jesus had cursed completely withered. He replied by teaching them the power of faith, and by exhorting them to a cultivation of prayer for its increase, and to forgive their enemies; he then proceeded to speak of his sufferings, and having taken a view of them, and proposed them as an example to his disciples, the prospect of them moved him to such a degree, that he uttered his

grief in a pathetic lamentation, which was answered by an audible voice from heaven, loud as thunder, and yet so articulate, that all who heard it understood; this voice Jesus declared was to confirm his mission. The subject of his prayer and the answer received, led our Saviour to meditate on the destruction of the kingdom of Satan, and the exaltation of man with himself into heaven as the effects of his incarnation. These revived his drooping spirits, and that his disciples might be comforted thereby, he foretold them as immediately connected with his sufferings. Then, after cautioning the Jews to improve by his instructions while yet he remained with them, he retired privately with his disciples, probably again to Bethany.

The evangelist John now introduces some remarks on the effects of our Saviour's labours; he observes, notwithstanding he had wrought so many miracles, comparatively few believed in the divinity of his mission and character, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah uttered seven hundred years before: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Yet there were exceptions; even members of the Jewish Sanhedrim admitted his pretensions privately, but were afraid to do so openly, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; thus loving "the praise of men more than the praise of God."

Every part of the life of our Saviour had been employed in doing good, but as he approached his end he seemed more anxious than ever to impart Divine instruction to those who gathered round him. This tended to enrage the chief priests, and made them determinedly bent upon his death, and as a step to this wicked deed, they deputed some of their servants to request him to explain whence he derived his authority. This question Jesus refused to answer, unless they would inform him first from whence John the Baptist received his commission; to this, fearful on the one hand of offending the people who venerated John as a prophet, and on the other actuated by the most

violent hatred towards that holy man, they replied, "We cannot tell." While they remained, he related the parable of the vineyard, which taught, that notwithstanding the professed readiness of the Jews to serve God, the Gentiles would sooner yield to the obedience of faith; at this time also he related the parable of the husbandman, which he formed upon one made use of by the prophet Isaiah, and in which he represented the crimes of the Jews in rejecting all the messengers of God, with his only begotten Son, and in mis-improving the Mosaical dispensation; he warned them also of the danger they incurred by such a long course of rebellion; at which the priests were highly incensed, and would have apprehended him had they not been restrained by the fear they had of the people. Our Lord then related, with a few variations, a parable he had already delivered concerning the marriage supper of a king's son, which referred also to the treatment the prophets and himself had received at the hands of the Jewish nation; after which, unable longer to bear his reproofs, the chief priests and Pharisees departed. But though they had departed from him, their rage was unabated; they now joined with the Herodians, men with whom they were constantly at variance, to endeavour to ensnare him by a question concerning the tribute paid to Cæsar. Being repulsed, the Sadducees tried the success of their subtlety touching the resurrection of the dead; he showed them that their error sprang from ignorance of the Scriptures and of the power of God, and that the truth of the resurrection was implied in the Almighty's declaration, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," after *they* were removed from earth. Having thus silenced the Sadducees, a scribe inquired, "Which is the great commandment in the law?" He replied that our whole duty consisted in first loving God, with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves; "And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from day forth ask him any more questions."

Our Saviour now thought proper, to make trial of the scribes and Pharisees' skill in the sacred writings. For this purpose he inquired publicly their opinion of a difficulty concerning the pedigree of the Messiah; namely, how the Messiah could at once be the son of David and his Lord, and no man was able to answer him a word. Thus did he silence his opposers, and following up his victory over them, he solemnly admonished the people who had listened to the disputations, and who heard his word gladly, to beware of the scribes and Pharisees, to do indeed what they commanded them according to the law, but not to take their conduct as the rule of life; then addressing *them*, he charged them with doing everything to be seen of men, with making broad their phylacteries (that is, slips of parchment containing portions of the law worn upon their foreheads and arms), with loving "the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greeting in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi." This discourse was delivered in the hearing of many of their order; it is no wonder therefore that they were incensed with him for such plainness of speech, and that they watched an opportunity of destroying him. Knowing their designs, he now denounced the most fearful woes against them, not only on account of personal injuries, but for their great wickedness; after which he renewed his lamentation over their ill-fated city.

Being now in the treasury, where thirteen chests were placed to receive the offerings of the people, our Lord observed a poor widow cast in two mites, "all that she had, even all her living." This act he publicly commended, as more liberal, and more acceptable to God, than the ostentatious donations of the rich. He then went out of the temple, when his disciples directed his attention to the large and beautiful stones in the eastern wall of that sacred edifice; upon which he observed, that the days would come, in which there should not be left one stone upon another; a prediction fulfilled to the very letter, when the city was taken by Titus, notwithstanding his

exertions to save it from ruin, in order to preserve it as an ornament to the empire. The Jewish Talmud says, that "Junius Rufus, one of the captains of Titus, did with a plough-share tear up the foundations of the temple." Jesus now delivered a prediction of considerable length concerning the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, which has been fully accomplished.

As the miseries, mankind were to undergo at the destruction of Jerusalem, the passions its approach would give birth to in their minds, together with the suddenness of its arrival, resemble what shall happen at the last day,

That secret coming of the Son of Man,
When all the cherub-throning clouds shall shine,
Irradiate with his bright advancing sign, (MILMAN,)

our Lord took occasion to refer to that awful scene. He exhorted his disciples to watchfulness, from the uncertainty of the hour of his approach, the blessedness which would attend his followers, and the awful judgments which would overtake the wicked, particularly those who knew, but neglected their duty. This point he illustrated by the parables of a householder, of a bridegroom coming at midnight to virgins, ten of whom were wise, and ten foolish, and of a nobleman calling his servants to account for the talents he had entrusted them with, at his setting out on a distant journey. He then uttered a plain prediction of his own most awful procedure at the judgment, when his angels shall sever the wicked from the just, to hear their final doom, and concluded by foretelling, that within two days he should be betrayed, and delivered by the Jews into the hands of the Romans, to suffer death upon the cross.

Our Saviour passed this night at the Mount of Olives, from whence he came early in the morning again to the temple. Here he found the people already collected to hear him, but it does not appear, however, that he delivered any public discourse on this day. It is supposed, that he spent it in preparing for the dreadful sufferings he was about to endure for their sake. In the mean time,

the chief priests, and scribes, and Pharisees, held a council in the palace of Caiaphas the high-priest, where they formed some designs of taking his life away secretly, fearing the numbers of his adherents. He now came to Bethany with his disciples, and took up his lodgings with one Simon a leper, one on whom he had, probably, exercised his healing power. During the time of supper, a woman came and poured an alabaster box of very precious ointment upon his head, for which the disciples rebuked her, imagining that it was waste; and they expressed themselves in language which cast a tacit reflection upon our Lord. But Jesus knowing their thoughts as well as words, told them, that the poor, for whom they had professed such regard, was always at hand for the exercise of their charity, but that he should soon be removed, and that this act, which they had so condemned, was a preparation for his approaching obsequies; and it should bring upon her who performed it, the respect and admiration of man, till time should be no more. It has been supposed, that this reproof so irritated the mind of Judas Iscariot, the most forward in condemning the woman's conduct, as to induce him to commit the most abominable action ever perpetrated by the sons of men,—the betrayal of his Lord. It might be so, for immediately after, he went and covenanted with the chief priests and scribes, to deliver him into their hands for thirty pieces of silver, or about three pounds eight shillings and fivepence; a price, the most inhuman trafficker in human misery would disdain to receive as an equivalent for a slave.

The first day of unleavened bread had now arrived, and our Lord gave orders to Peter and John to make preparation for the passover, that is, to provide a room ready-furnished for the occasion, to purchase a lamb which was to be killed and roasted, and to procure the bread, wine, and bitter herbs made use of at these solemnities. These being provided, and the time appointed drawing nigh, Jesus, who was now about to finish the great work of human redemption, came with his apostles to eat the

passover. Having partaken of the paschal lamb with his disciples, and knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of the world to his Father, he expressed his constant affection for them in the most endearing words and actions. Rising from the table, in the humble posture of the meanest servant, he washed the feet of his disciples, wiping them with the towel wherewith he was girded, and not only by this ceremony, but by his discourse, instructed them to practise humility.

After performing this office of condescension, our Saviour sat down to the second supper, which was of unleavened bread and bitter herbs, and was eucharistical, and commemorative of the deliverance from Egypt. While partaking of this supper, he made known that one of their number should betray him. Alarmed at this extraordinary charge, the eleven who were innocent, were anxious to know to whom it applied, and very eagerly inquired each for himself, "Lord, is it I?" He answered, "He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon." The guilty man would have denied the charge; but Jesus again affirmed he was the man, and charged him not to delay his purpose. It is said, that when Judas received the sop, "Satan entered into him." The spirit of malice which had probably long lurked within his breast, began to be his ruling passion; and soon after he left the company. Our Saviour then proceeded to comfort his disciples, and to exhort them to cultivate a spirit of harmony, and having thus prepared the minds of his disciples, and finished the passover, he proceeded to institute in its stead, another solemn feast, that of the Lord's Supper. This is beautifully and explicitly described by the Apostle Paul;—"The Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when

he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood : this do ye as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

How frail our nature is, none can tell ! While yet the distress of our Saviour was before their eyes, the disciples renewed the subject of supremacy. This, as he had done before, he suppressed, dehorting them from ambition ; and to prevent any misunderstanding between them, he promised them a kingdom, upon the same terms his Father had promised him one ; adding, that they should be next to him, and at his departure, should have the government of his Church. After this, Jesus delivered a long consolatory discourse to his disciples concerning the mansions which he was going to prepare for them, the Father's love for them, the coming of the Holy Spirit to instruct and comfort them, their union with him under the parable of the vine, the service of himself to them, and their afflictions in the world ; concluding with a prayer, chiefly in behalf of his disciples and people. They then sung an hymn, and went out into the Mount of Olives.

And now the fearful agonies, which our Saviour was to endure for the sins of the world, commenced. Taking with him Peter, and James, and John, he entered into a garden, known by the name of the Garden of Gethsemane. Here, after commanding his disciples to watch, he went forward about a stone's cast, and fell on the ground and prayed, that "if it were possible," or consistent with the great end of his mission, he might be delivered from the sorrows that had already seized upon his soul. "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." After he had prayed, he returned to his disciples, whom he found asleep ; and he mildly reproved them for slumbering at such an unseasonable hour ; and yet, ever touched with man's infirmities, he excused their weakness by acknowledging, that though their spirits might be willing, the flesh was weak. He then a second and a third time retired, and a second and a third time found them slum-

bering on his return. It is remarked, that between his second and third prayer, an angel appeared "strengthening him," a proof that his sufferings were more than human. They were, indeed, the sufferings of one who was enduring the Divine wrath on account of the sins of a world, and of one who was conflicting with the powers of darkness. In reference to this conflict, Isaiah introduces Christ as a victor returning from the field of battle, in a remarkable prophecy, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment."

When our Saviour returned the third time to his disciples, he said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand." It was so. At that instant Judas appeared with a cohort of Roman soldiers, and the servants of the priests armed, to apprehend him. The better to effect his wicked purpose, the apostate appeared a short distance before the soldiers, and having approached his Master, called him by that appellation, and kissed him; the sign he had previously given to the soldiers to come forward. This Jesus knew, and immediately charged him with treachery. Then seeing the soldiers approach, he demanded who it was they sought? They replied, Jesus of Nazareth; upon which he told them he was the person; and immediately the whole multitude of them walked involuntarily backward, and fell to the ground. This display of Divine power upon their own persons, was well calculated to teach them the madness of their proceedings;—to teach them that

he could deliver himself, and punish them for their temerity; but they heeded it not. They had no sooner recovered, than they advanced a second time to apprehend him, and he willingly surrendered himself into their hands, to be led "as a sheep to the slaughter." This was the hour in which the powers of darkness were to prevail, that all the Scriptures respecting his triumphs and sufferings might be fulfilled. In the mean while, agreeably to prophecy, his disciples "forsook him, and fled."

Having bound Jesus, the soldiers led him away to the house of Annas, and then to the palace of the high-priest. Here every artifice was made use of to procure evidence against him, but in vain: even the subornation of false witnesses failed. At length, however, the high-priest had recourse to solemn adjuration, to which the accused was compelled to give an explicit reply. And here our Saviour's integrity shines forth most conspicuously: no sooner had Caiaphas said, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God," than he replied, "I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right-hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." At these words, Caiaphas rent his clothes, and accused him of blasphemy: the other members of the Sanhedrim also declared him guilty of that crime, the punishment of which was death; but that they might not incur the odium of his execution, they determined to deliver him into the hands of the Romans, as a seditious person, or as one who had not only endeavoured to overthrow the Jewish polity, but to raise a revolt against Caesar. For this purpose, after having permitted him to be insulted by the populace, they carried him to the pretorium, or judgment-hall, and delivered him to Pilate the governor.

In the mean time, Judas Iscariot, pierced with the deepest remorse, in order to make some reparation for his treacherous conduct, came and confessed his sin openly before the council; and, as the most decisive testimony he could give of his Master's innocence, he desired them to take

back the wages of his iniquity. They would not, however, receive the money, or reverse their sentence, so that, unable to endure the recollection of his guilt, the wretched apostate threw down the money before them, and went and hanged himself.

Yet oft he snatched, and started as he hung ;
So when the senses half enslumbered lie,
The headlong body ready to be flung,
By the deluding fancy, from some high
And craggy rock, recovers greedily,
And clasps the yielding pillow, half-asleep ;
And, as from Heaven it tumbled to the deep,
Feels a cold sweat through every trembling member creep.

GILES FLETCHER.

With the sum Judas had received, the priests purchased the potter's field, as a place of interment for strangers, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Jeremiah: "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value ; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me."

It would appear that the Jews, when they delivered our Lord into the hands of Pilate, expected that he would immediately ratify their sentence, and order him to be executed : in this, however, they were mistaken ; though a heathen, he showed a strong regard for justice. The priests and the multitude, fearing they should be defiled by entering into the house of a Gentile during the feast of the passover, had taken their station without, waiting the desired issue. Pilate, therefore, went out, and inquired what accusation they brought against him? Wishing to extol their regard to justice, or imagining he showed an undue partiality to the prisoner, they replied, "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee." This was a very unsatisfactory reply, and so Pilate evidently considered it ; he therefore told them to take him and judge him according to their law. This, however, the priests refused to do, telling him that it was not lawful for them to put any one to death. On

seeing he would not take cognizance of the real charge on which they had pronounced sentence of condemnation in their own court, they immediately preferred a new charge against him, of which none but Pilate could be the judge. "We found this fellow perverting the nation," said they, "and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a King." When Pilate heard this, he returned into the judgment-hall, and examined Jesus touching the charge preferred against him. Our Lord did not deny that he was a King, but explained the nature of his kingdom to be entirely spiritual. "My kingdom," said he, "is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king, then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice." This reply of our Lord so convinced his judge of his innocence, that, after hastily inquiring, "What is truth?" or "What is this truth you teach?" he went forth and declared, "I find in him no fault at all." Unabashed, however, by this declaration, the priests persisted in their accusation; with more vehemence than before, they affirmed that he had attempted to raise a sedition, commencing his designs in Galilee, and going from thence throughout all Jewry. The allusion to Galilee was doubtless intended to inflame the mind of Pilate, he having a mortal hatred against that people; but it failed in its intended effect. On hearing he had been in Galilee, with a view of clearing himself of the matter, and of conciliating Herod, with whom he had been at variance, he resolved to send him to that monarch, who was then at Jerusalem on account of the feast. Accordingly, declaring that Herod was the better judge of the matters laid to the charge of the prisoner, he sent him thither. Herod, it is said, when he saw Jesus, was exceeding glad; for he had heard much of him, and he

hoped to see some notable miracle wrought by his hands ; but in this he was disappointed : our Lord refused to work miracles for his curiosity, and even to answer questions which the tyrant put to him. Mortified thereat, and to be revenged on him, he ordered him to be clothed with an old robe, in colour like to the king's, and then delivered him to his attendants, to be treated with all the ridicule and ignominy they could devise ; and bitter must their conduct have been to the holy mind of Jesus, but he complained not ; no, though despised and rejected of men, he opened not his mouth, either in vindication of himself, or in reproach for their conduct.

After our Saviour had been thus insulted, he was sent back to Pilate, and *that* governor, finding Herod took no further cognizance of the matter than treating him with contempt as an impostor, and that after his being examined both by himself and the monarch, no fault could be found in him, declared to the Jews his determination of discharging him ; and yet not without punishment. He declared him innocent, but, to please the priests, he declared also (and weak and base was his conduct in so doing), that he would chastise him. This, however, was not sufficient to satisfy their inveterate malignity ; against all evidence and justice, they still demanded his life. All the accusations which the priests had brought against Jesus, were so many instances of their 'hatred towards him. This Pilate saw, and even *his* bosom glowed with pity for him : many were the entreaties he made to them on his behalf, but finding that it only tended to increase their animosity, he appealed to the people. At the pass-over, it was customary for the governor to release any prisoner whom they might select, and as they were now clamorous for this privilege, Pilate embraced the opportunity of proposing the release of either Jesus or Barabbas. This latter was both a robber and a murderer ; when, therefore, Pilate proposed him in competition with one whose life was spent in doing good, and from whose hands they had received so many benefits, he probably concluded

that they would be unanimous in their demand for the release of their kind benefactor. But he was mistaken; instigated by the chief-priests, they demanded the release of Barabbas. Still Pilate, willing and anxious to save the innocent, delayed the sentence. He asked, "What shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?" They all cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" and the governor asked, "Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go." But they cried out the more exceedingly, "Let him be crucified." And this was from the lips of the men who, a short time before, welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem with loud hosannas! So fickle is the favour of the multitude, and so treacherous and wicked is the human heart!

At length the patience of Pilate was exhausted, and sentence was given. Barabbas the robber was released, and Jesus, the Lord of life and glory, was doomed to be publicly scourged, as a criminal devoted to death. In passing this sentence, however, Pilate, convinced of his innocence, imagining that he could free himself from the guilt of the atrocious deed, took water, and washing his hands in the presence of the people, said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it." But if he considered himself innocent of the crime, not so did an offended God. He noted it down in his book of remembrance, and it is remarkable that Pilate was soon after deposed at the instigation of the very people for whom he had sacrificed his conscience; a just retribution for his iniquity. Nor did he suffer alone; when Pilate had endeavoured to excuse himself from the guilt of shedding innocent blood, the people exclaimed, "His blood be on us, and on our children." And so it came to pass: their imprecation was accomplished in the destruction of Jerusalem, and still remains in force, in their scattered and desolate condition, as wanderers among all nations, despised, and void of power.

Through every clime and kingdom of the world,
They are sent forth to publish as they pass,
And though they scorn his name, by woes profess
That Jesus, whom their fathers crucified,
Is Saviour, Christ, Messias, Son of God.

The sentence being passed, Jesus was delivered into the hands of the soldiers. These barbarous men arrayed him in a purple robe, placed a crown of thorns upon his head, and a reed in his hand, bowing the knee to him in derision, and saying, "Hail, king of the Jews." Nor was this all: some of them smote him with their hands, others spat upon him, while others took the reed, and smote upon his head, that the crown of thorns might pierce his temples. Thus arrayed, and in this mangled condition, he was again presented to the people by Pilate, who again asserted his innocence; but, all unmoved at the sad spectacle, they again demanded that he should be crucified.

We now behold him led away to Mount Calvary, the place of his execution. On his shoulders is a cross, and around him press one vast assembly of bitter and insulting foes. But his human nature sinks beneath his sufferings, and the soldiers, not out of compassion, but fearing he might expire by the way, compelled one Simon, a Cyrenian, to bear the ponderous load. When they had arrived at the appointed spot, a mixture of vinegar and gall was offered to Jesus; but "when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink." In this also we behold the cruelty of his foes: the custom on these occasions was to give the sufferers a mixture of wine and myrrh, in order to stupefy the senses, and to hasten death. But this was denied the Lamb of God, and the nauseous draught of gall and vinegar, was substituted in its stead, thus fulfilling the prophecy, "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."

The body of our Lord was now laid upon the tree, and his arms being stretched out, nails were driven into the wood through the palms of his hands, and the tender part of his feet. A label was then affixed over his head, whereon

was written, "Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews," a title which gave great offence to the priests. In this state he was raised up between heaven and earth, a spectacle to angels and to men, while the blood flowed in streams from his temples, his hands, and his feet, and his every nerve was racked with agony.

It might have been expected that the sight of so much suffering would have excited pity in the breasts of the beholders; but no:

His radious head with shameful thorns they tear,
His tender back with bloody whips they rent,
His side and heart they furrow with a spear,
His hands and feet with riving nails they tent;
And, as to disentrail his soul they meant,
They jolly at his grief, and make their game,
His naked body to expose to shame,
That all might come to see, and all might see that came.

GILES FLETCHER.

They mocked him in his last agonies, and taunted him with assuming the character of the Messiah, again fulfilling a prophecy concerning him, spoken by the Psalmist: "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him."

Nor was it the beholders at the foot of the cross alone that treated the sufferer with derision: so generally was he "despised and rejected of men," that even one of the thieves who was suffering by his side joined in the burden of their reproach. Not so, however, did the other; he, touched by Divine grace, reproved his companion, acknowledging the justice of their punishment, and the innocency of Jesus; and so convinced was he of the divinity of Christ, that he addressed him as his sovereign Lord. He cried, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom;" and Jesus replied, "Verily, I say unto thee, This day shalt thou be with me in paradise:" and there, doubtless, he now sings the triumphs of his Saviour.

We have seen that at the beginning of the sorrows of our Lord, all forsook him; yet there were some who ventured to follow afar off, and even to stand beneath his cross. These attached friends were pious women, among whom was his mother, and the apostle John. As they stood weeping, our Lord observed them, and though he was almost at the point of death, he spake a few words, in which he expressed the most affectionate regard for them. To John, indeed, as a dying bequest, he commended his mother, enjoining both him and her, henceforth to consider each other in the endearing relation of parent and child: thus demonstrating, even in death, a strength of benevolence, unexampled, and divine.

Shortly after this, a supernatural darkness overspread the earth, which lasted from twelve at noon to three. This was an awful phenomenon, and one which denoted the Divine wrath against sin. It was also an emblem of that eclipse our Saviour was suffering, when, amidst his fearful agonies, he exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" a sentence which David had uttered as prophetic of the event. After this, Jesus, knowing that almost all the prophecies concerning him were fulfilled, to complete the only one remaining unaccomplished while in life, exclaimed, "I thirst," assured that, according to the prediction, they would offer him vinegar. They did so; one of the soldiers filling a sponge with vinegar, wrapping it about with hyssop, and putting it on a reed, reached it to his lips that he might drink; but, after tasting it, he refused. And now, his Father's wrath being appeased, his sacrifice accepted, and man saved, he said, "It is finished;" and bowing his head, he commended his spirit into his Father's hands, and expired.

At that instant all nature was agitated; the heavens were covered with darkness, the sun seemed erased from the firmament, the earth shook to her foundations, the rocks rent, the graves opened, and many saints arose and appeared to their friends; while the veil which parted the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple, was rent in

twain. These miracles terrified the spectators; they had been instant with loud voices to have him crucified, they had come thither to indulge their enmity by witnessing his sufferings, but they were now convinced of his innocence, and they returned to the city pensive and silent, with downcast eyes, and filled with the most bitter remorse. The very Gentile soldiers, bold as they were before, were alarmed, and were obliged to confess, that "this was the Son of God."

The wise philosopher cried all aghast,
 "The God of nature surely languished;"
 The sad Centurion cried out as fast,
 "The Son of God, the Son of God was dead."
 The headlong Jew hung down his pensive head,
 And homewards fared; and ever as he went
 He smote his breast, half desperately bent;
 The very woods and beasts, did seem his death lament.

GILES FLETCHER.

But the Pharisees and priests still remained unaffected. In the midst of these portentous signs of the wrath of Heaven, they came to Pilate to request him to cause the body to be removed on that day, because the Paschal festival, which fell on the Jewish Sabbath, was to be celebrated on the morrow, and no body might, according to the Jewish law, remain on the cross during that festival. At the same time they begged that the legs of the crucified might be broken, in order to ensure a speedy death. Pilate acceded to their requests, and soldiers were accordingly sent for that purpos; but Scripture had said, "A bone of him shall not be broken," nor did it fail; the soldiers came, and finding he was already dead, they disobeyed their command. One of them, however, pierced his side with a spear, and a miraculous effusion of blood and water issued from the wound. This deed fulfilled another portion of Scripture, which saith, "They shall look on him whom they pierced."

It was the custom of the Jews to cast out the bodies of those who had suffered upon the cross as unworthy of interment; but our Lord, though he suffered thus ignomi-

niously, though he suffered as a transgressor, was, as ancient prophecy foretold, to make his grave with the rich in his death. Agreeably to this, Joseph of Arimathea, a man possessed of wealth and influence, regardless of the hatred he might incur by the action, came to Pilate and solicited the body of Jesus. His request was granted, and assisted by Nicodemus he embalmed it and laid it in a new tomb, which he in his own garden had hewn out of a rock, and had prepared for his own interment; "and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre."

The death and burial of our Lord are very minutely recorded by the evangelists, that the proofs of his resurrection might not be disputed, nor have we their testimony alone. The very malignity of the Jews concur in establishing this fundamental doctrine of our most holy religion; they, remembering that Jesus had said that he would rise again in three days, came to Pilate, and informing him of the prediction, requested a military guard to watch his resting-place, which was granted; and that they might not be imposed upon by any collusion between the guard and his friends, they affixed a seal to the stone at the sepulchre; but all their art, all their precaution, and all their malice was in vain. At the dawn of the first day of the week

Majestical he rose : trembled the earth ;
The ponderous gate of stone was rolled away ;
The keepers fell, the angel, awe-struck, sunk
Into invisibility, while forth
The Saviour of the world walked and stood
Before the sepulchre, and viewed the clouds
Empurpled glorious by the rising sun.—GRAHAM.

The soldiers when they beheld these wonders fled into the city, carrying the information to their employers, and these wicked men, finding the prediction literally fulfilled, assembled the Sanhedrim, and gave the guard a large sum of money to declare that his disciples came by night and stole him away whilst they slept, an invention as weak as it was malicious; for if they were slumbering, they could not tell by what means he had left

the grave. But the evidence of the resurrection of our Lord rests not on one or two circumstances; the same morning it was made known by angels to those pious women that had wept at the foot of his cross, and who now came at the dawn of day to weep over his grave.

These carried the glad tidings to his disciples, and they were soon convinced of the reality by his appearance. On this occasion one of the disciples named Thomas was not present, and when informed of it he was so incredulous, that he declared he would not believe unless he should see his wounds, and be permitted to thrust his hand into his side. His doubts were, however, quickly removed; Jesus again appeared to his disciples, and Thomas being with them, no longer faithless, exclaimed in wonder and adoration, "My Lord and my God." Soon after this he appeared to some of his disciples when fishing on the Sea of Tiberias, and partook of an entertainment with them. He then appeared to James, then to the eleven, and finally to five hundred brethren at once on a mountain in Galilee, the greater part of whom were alive in the days of the Apostle Paul.

And now the last and most public manifestation of our Saviour was at hand. Forty days after his resurrection he appeared to the apostles at Jerusalem, at which time he gave them particular instructions concerning their mission. He directed them to wait at Jerusalem till they were endued with the Holy Ghost, and then to go forth and preach the Gospel to every creature under heaven, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Thus conversing with them he led them to the Mount of Olives, and when he had arrived there he lifted up his hands and blessed them; and he had no sooner given them his benediction, than "he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

Lift up your heads ye everlasting gates
And give the King of glory to come in;
Who is the King of glory? He who left
His throne of glory for the pang of death;

Lift up your heads ye everlasting gates,
 And give the King of glory to come in;
 Who is the King of glory? He who slew
 The ravenous foe that gorged all human race!
 The King of glory, he whose glory filled
 Heaven with amazement at his love to man,
 And with Divine complacency beheld
 Powers most illumined wildered in the theme.—YOUNG.

In heaven our Saviour now liveth to make intercession for us, and to dispense those gifts which he purchased by his sufferings, the gifts of grace here, and glory hereafter, to all that come unto God by him. Yet once again will he appear on earth, not indeed as a wanderer clothed in mortal flesh as before, but with the world flaming beneath his feet, he shall come, in all the majesty of heaven, as the Judge of all mankind.

From Adam to his youngest heir
 Not one shall 'scape that muster-roll;
 Each, as if he alone were there,
 Shall stand, and win or lose his soul.
 These from the Judge's presence go
 Down into everlasting woe;
 Vengeance hath barred the gates of hell,
 The scenes within no tongue can tell.

But lo! far off the righteous pass
 To glory from the King's right-hand,
 In silence, on the sea of glass,
 Heaven's numbers without number stand,
 While He who bore the cross lays down
 His priestly robe and victor crown;
 The mediatorial reign complete,
 All things are put beneath his feet.

Then every eye in him shall see
 (While thrones and powers before him fall),
 The fulness of the Deity,
 Where God himself is all in all.
 Oh! how eternity shall ring
 With the first note the ransomed sing!
 While in that strain all voices blend,
 Which once begun shall never end.—MONTGOMERY

ST. PETER.

When thou, who in doubt and in danger hadst been
 Devoted and firm to his side,
 Wert false to thy Lord in the last awful scene,
 And his name and his sorrows denied,
 He pitied thy weakness, and pardoned thy fears,
 His last look was mercy to thee ;
 But oh ! in that moment, how bitter thy tears,
 How deep would thy penitence be !

And thus when the storms of temptation arise,
 And the light of his glory is veiled,
 When the foe of the righteous exults in his pride,
 And the faith of the Christian has failed,—
 Like thee, if repentant the Saviour we seek,
 Oh ! still shall his grace be as free ;
 Nor will he condemn a believer more weak,
 For a crime which he pardoned in thee.—DALE.

Suffered Martyrdom, A. D. 65.

ONE of the strongest proofs of the Divine origin of the Christian religion is, that it was promulgated and established by the labours of a few unlettered individuals, men utterly destitute of acquirements in themselves necessary for the establishment of a new system ; and this proof is stronger when we consider that they were men, who in common with the Jewish nation tenaciously held the opinion that the Messiah was come to erect a temporal kingdom, and who, when our Lord predicted *his* and *their* sufferings, but for the power of God manifested over them, would, as others did, have forsaken his service. We see, therefore, that man was only the instrument in the hands of God in establishing Christianity. Among the most noted of these favoured men was Simon Peter, a native of Bethsaida, a town on the western shore of the lake of Gennesareth. The trade of Peter was that of a fisherman, and he had a brother named Andrew, associated with him

in his own occupation; their father's name was Jonas. It was at the invitation of his brother that he first came to Jesus; Andrew was a disciple of the Baptist, and hearing that holy man point out Jesus as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," he believed and communicated the glad tidings to Peter, and brought him to the Saviour. At this first introduction, our Lord, foreseeing the fortitude he would exercise in the dispensing of the Word of life, honoured him with the name of Cephas, or Peter, which signifies a rock or stone. From this time the brothers became the disciples of Jesus, and often attended him; notwithstanding they followed their trade of fishing occasionally, till called to a more regular attendance to become "fishers of men." When our Lord also chose twelve of his disciples to be constantly with him and to be his apostles, Peter and Andrew were enrolled in that number, and the former stood first in the evangelical enumeration; not indeed that he held any superiority of power over the rest, for the apostles were all equal in rank, and enjoyed equal privileges one with the other.

About this time Peter had left Bethsaida, and had gone to reside at Capernaum with his wife, supposed to have been a native of that town; and Jesus, after he took up his ordinary residence at that place, abode with him: this was a high honour conferred upon him, and one which would intimate that he was a favourite with his Master.

After Peter was made an apostle, he manifested, on many occasions, the strongest faith in Jesus, as the Messiah, and displayed extraordinary zeal in his service. Thus, when Jesus came to his disciples, walking on the sea, and they were affrighted, supposing that they saw a spirit, Peter, on discovering who it was, said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water," assured that he should be safe. Nevertheless, at this time, when he felt the watery element give way to the impress of his feet, his faith failed him, and he cried out, "Lord, save me." The hand of his Master was soon stretched forth to his aid, and as he succoured him he uttered this gentle

reproof,—“O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” The next day, when our Lord was discoursing in the synagogue at Capernaum, his doctrine was so difficult to human nature, and taught truths so contrary to the general expectation, that numbers forsook him. On this occasion he asked the twelve, “Will ye also go away?” Peter answered, “Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” To the same effect Peter replied to our Saviour’s questions concerning the opinion the nation at large, and themselves individually, entertained of him; and he was declared blessed on account of his faith. On this occasion, also, our Saviour uttered that passage which the church of Rome adduces as the authority for her claim to infallibility, and the supremacy of her pontiff as Peter’s successor: “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” As the same power was conferred on all the disciples at a later date, the answer our Lord made was evidently designed for all, without distinction, with this exception,—that Peter was to be the first, who, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, should preach the Gospel both to the Jew and the Gentile, which he accordingly did.

It would appear that Peter, with James and John, lived in peculiar habits of intimacy with the Saviour, receiving various marks of favour at his hands. With *them* he was admitted to witness the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus; with *them* in the Mount he beheld the transfiguration; and with *them* he accompanied Jesus to the garden of Gethsemane, where he displayed great fervour and zeal for his Divine master. He cut off the ear of the servant of the high priest when the armed band came to apprehend him, and yet, notwithstanding the favours he

had received, and the zeal he had displayed, as soon as Jesus suffered himself to be bound by the soldiers, and he saw that persecution awaited him, HE, with the rest of the disciples, filled with alarm, forsook him and fled. Nor was this all; from a lingering spirit of mingled curiosity and affection, he followed him afar off, and even ventured into the palace of the high priest to witness the trial. Here, as he was warming himself by the fire among the officers, three several times he denied that he had any knowledge of the man, and had the daring to appeal to heaven for the truth of his assertions. But he soon repented. As he uttered his last denial, the cock crew, and his Master, looking upon him with an eye of pity, he recalled his former words to mind, "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out and wept bitterly."

The tears of Peter were the tears of genuine repentance, and he received a gracious pardon; and to testify his acceptance of the fallen apostle, his Lord, after his resurrection, ordered the women to carry the tidings of his resurrection to Peter by name, and he appeared to him before he showed himself to any other of his apostles. At another time, also, when he appeared to them by the lake of Tiberias, he displayed his affection for Peter, after he had made trial of his sincerity, by confirming him in the apostolic office, and by giving him a special commission to feed his heritage. At this time, also, our Lord predicted the manner of death by which he should glorify God; he was to be a martyr. And yet, with martyrdom before his eyes, Peter from that time faltered not in his faith, nor slackened his zeal in the cause of his Master.

That Peter was one of the chief of the apostles, his conduct proved. Soon after our Saviour's ascension, in a numerous assembly of the apostles and brethren, Peter recommended that one should be chosen to fill up the vacancy occasioned by the apostasy of Judas. His advice was accepted, and, upon lots being cast, Matthias was chosen, and was numbered with the eleven apostles. At

the feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles and disciples, Peter stood up, and, in the name of his brethren, gave the multitude an account of the miracle, and vindicated himself and them from the aspersion cast upon them that "they were filled with wine;" and so convincing were his arguments, so effective his inspired eloquence, that three thousand souls on that occasion were added to the number of believers.

Some days after this, Peter and John, going up to the temple to prayer, a man, who had been a cripple from his birth, sitting at the gate thereof, asked alms; Peter told him that he possessed neither gold nor silver, but, in the name of Jesus, he charged him to rise and walk, and, in an instant, he was cured. This miracle drew an admiring crowd round the apostles, and Peter informed them that it was not by their own powers, but by the influence of Jesus Christ, whom they had lately crucified, but who had arisen and ascended to glory, that they had performed the deed. He then showed them that Jesus was the Messiah, that if they believed not in him, they should perish, and that God had sent him to bless them in turning them from their iniquities. This discourse produced the conversion of five thousand.

But though they had thus attested their mission, at eventide, by the command of the Sanhedrim, the apostles were cast into prison, and the next day they were examined touching the cure performed. Having now lost all fear of man, Peter boldly declared that it was performed by the authority and power of Christ, whom they slew, but whom God had raised from the dead. The council, knowing that they were unlearned men, were astonished at their wisdom, but they were not convinced; they charged them to preach no more in the name of Jesus. The apostles, however, appealed to them whether they ought not to obey God rather than man; and, after further threatenings, they were allowed to depart, and returned to their brethren, who, with them, with one heart and voice, praised God, and prayed for strength to continue the

work in which they were engaged; and while they yet prayed, the Holy Ghost descended upon them in a miraculous manner in answer to their petitions.

In this early age of Christianity, it was usual for rich converts to sell their estates and give the apostles the money to be expended in deeds of charity. Among the rest, one Ananias and his wife sold theirs, but kept back part of the price. This fraud Peter detected, and, charging them with it separately, they affirmed they had not received more than the sum they had given the apostles, for which falsehood they were both seized with instant death. This awful event tended to increase the reputation of the character of the apostles with the multitude; but it had no such effect upon the Sanhedrim. They were the more enraged, and again cast Peter and John into prison. They were, however, released by an angel, and they returned to preach in the courts of the temple. This being made known to the council, they were again apprehended and reminded of the previous charge given them not to preach; but Peter now replied, that they would obey God rather than man, and fearlessly charged them with the murder of the Messiah, and asserted that, notwithstanding their wickedness, he was exalted to be "a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." This so provoked the Sanhedrim, that, but for the wise reasonings of Gamaliel, one of their number, they would have put them to death, but diverted thereby from their fatal purpose, they chastised them and set them at liberty. And so zealous were the apostles in their mission, that they departed, rejoicing that they were considered worthy to suffer for their crucified Redeemer.

Soon after this, a general persecution commenced against the church, in which Stephen suffered martyrdom. This had the effect of dispersing the disciples; but it was so ordered by the good providence of God as to be the means of diffusing the Gospel in the neighbouring countries, thus fulfilling the prophecy, "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The

words was preached with so much success in Samaria by Philip, that Peter and John went thither, to confirm the converts in their most holy faith. When they had preached throughout Samaria, peace being again restored to the church, the two apostles returned to Jerusalem; and Peter went from thence on a visit to those places where Christianity had spread during the time of the persecution. At Lydda he miraculously cured Eneas of a palsy he had been afflicted with eight years; and at Joppa, a neighbouring town, he restored a disciple to life named Tabitha, or Dorcas, by which many were convinced of the truth of the doctrines he preached, and were converted to the Christian faith. Hitherto the labours of the apostles had been confined exclusively to the Jewish nation, but now they were to commence the work among the Gentiles. While at Joppa, Peter was instructed by a vision, that the separation between the Jew and Gentile was at an end, and that all the human race was henceforth to look to one common Saviour for their salvation. This vision was repeated thrice, and as Peter was musing upon its meaning, it was revealed to him that three men sought him, and he was commanded to go with them, nothing doubting, for God had sent them. These messengers soon arrived, and informed him that Cornelius, a devout centurion, had sent for him, to instruct him in the way of life, and that he was instigated thereto by an angel; Peter accordingly went, and as he entered the house, Cornelius met him with a lowly obeisance; but homage is due to God alone, and so Peter taught by his conduct; taking him by the hand, he exclaimed, "Stand up; I myself also am a man." When Peter came into the house, he found a great number collected together to hear his words; accordingly, after he had explained to them the change which had just been wrought in his mind by the vision, and had heard from the lips of Cornelius the reason why he had sent for him, he instructed them in the principles of the Christian religion; and while he was yet preaching the doctrine of remission of sins through a crucified Saviour, the Holy Spirit descended

upon all the Gentile congregation. This so convinced Peter, that, turning to his brethren of the circumcision, who had accompanied him thither, he asked, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" and none urging an objection to his proposal, he straightway commanded the whole household "to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

But if the disciples with Peter were convinced that the work among the Gentiles was of God, not so were those at Jerusalem; they still adhered to the Jewish prejudice, that they were to hold no communion with other nations. When therefore Peter returned, they contended with him, saying, "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them;" Peter, however, gave them such an explicit relation of the extraordinary circumstances that actuated his conduct, and his preaching produced such an effect, that their murmurings were silenced, and they "glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Yes,—

Thus saith the Lord,—My Church, to thee,
Peace, like a river, I will send;
The Gentiles, in a stream shall see
My mercy flowing without end.

The isles that never heard my fame,
Nor knew the glory of my might,
They shall be taught to fear my name;
—Called out of darkness into light.

And it shall come to pass, that vows
From Sabbath unto Sabbath day;
From moon to moon, in mine own house,
All nations, tribes, and tongues, shall pay.

MONTGOMERY.

For some time the church had enjoyed rest from all her enemies round about, but the enmity of the human heart against the Gospel still remained the same, and about the end of the reign of Caligula it displayed itself anew. Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, caused the

apostle James, the son of Zebedee, to be beheaded, and seeing that the deed, cruel and unjust as it was, pleased the Sanhedrim, he took Peter, and cast him into prison, intending, after the passover, to bring him forth to the Jews, and if they thought fit, to put him to death also. But no arm stretched forth to the hurt of the servants of God can smite, unless he gives permission, and so Herod found. The apostle was secured with irons, and was kept between two soldiers; but on the night before his intended execution, an angel struck off his chains, opened the prison doors, and set the captive free. This so exasperated Herod, that he caused the guard to be put to death; a cruel deed and one for which, by the Divine judgment, he suffered a miserable death soon after, in the midst of his flattering courtiers.

Nothing further is recorded of the apostle Peter, till the meeting of the council at Jerusalem, which was held on purpose to decide a controversy concerning the circumcision of the Gentile converts. At this meeting, if Peter had been possessed of any superiority over his brethren, it certainly would have been displayed; but no symptoms of it appear in the narrative; in common with Barnabas and Paul he bore testimony that God had granted by him the Word of life unto the Gentiles, and gave it as his opinion that since God had made no difference between the Jew and the Gentile, *they* ought not to impose upon them, the yoke of the ceremonial law. To this the council agreed, and their decision was given by James in these remarkable words: "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which, from among the Gentiles are turned to God."

About this time, Peter, and James, and John gave the right-hand of fellowship to Paul, and agreed that he should preach chiefly to the Gentiles; after which Peter travelled to Antioch, the capital of Pisidia; here at first he associated with the Gentile converts, but some coming from Jerusalem, who still adhered to the rites of Judaism, he separated himself from them, and had well nigh seduced

Barnabas into the same line of conduct. For this deed, Paul sharply contended with him, charging him with dissimulation, and practically contradicting the very speech he had uttered in the council; which rebuke was received by Peter with the deepest humility.

Peter wrote two inspired Epistles to the Jews of the dispersion; the first was designed to comfort them and to confirm them in their faith, amidst their fiery trials and persecutions, to direct them how to hear the word of God, how to act in their several stations, both civil and religious, and to caution them against the insurrections fomented by their countrymen against the Roman government; the second epistle, which was written a little before his death, inculcates their cultivation of virtue, their watching against false teachers and apostasy from the truth, and to live a holy and unblameable life, as in the perspective of the ruin of their nation, and of the last judgment: other writings have also been ascribed to Peter, but without good authority.

Nothing more is recorded of Peter in the Sacred History; Origen says he is supposed to have visited and to have preached to the Jews of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia; and Eusebius asserts that he visited Rome, where his labours were eminently successful, in opposing Simon Magus, who had procured to himself divine honours in that city. Thus much only, however, can be relied on for truth, that he suffered martyrdom during the first persecution, under Nero, with his head downward, himself desiring it might be so, deeming himself unworthy to suffer in the same position with his beloved Master. Thus died Peter, the most zealous of all the apostles; and now, though once he forsook and denied his Master, through that grace which he so ardently and so effectually preached, both to the Jew and the Gentile, he has entered into his rest; has sat down, as his Lord foretold he should, with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. There may we seek to enter, that we may enjoy the same high pleasures which

he doth in common with all the redeemed. How great those joys are, no ear hath heard, no tongue can tell, for

How can such joy as this want words to speak ?
And yet what words can speak such joy as this ?
Far from the world, that might their quiet break,
Here the glad souls the face of beauty kiss,
Poured out in pleasure on their beds of bliss ;
And, drunk with nectar torrents, ever hold
Their eyes on him, whose graces manifold,
The more they do behold, the more they would behold.

Their sight drinks lovely fires in at their eyes,
Their brain sweet incense with fine breath accloys,
That on God's sweating altar burning lies ;
Their hungry ears feed on the heavenly noise,
That angels sing, to tell their untold joys ;
Their understanding naked truth, their wills
The all and self-sufficient goodness fills,
That nothing here is wanting, but the want of ills.

No sorrow now hangs clouding on their brow,
No bloodless malady empales their face,
No age drops on their hairs his silver snow,
No nakedness their bodies doth embase,
No poverty themselves and their's disgrace,
No fear of death the joy of life devours,
No unchaste sleep their precious time deflowers,
No loss, no grief, no change, wait on their winged hours.

GILES FLETCHER.

ST. PAUL.

Straying by temples, towers, and shrines,
Which ye with votive offerings crown,
An altar stood before mine eyes,
Raised, To THE GOD UNKNOWN.

Whom ye unknowing fall before,
The ETERNAL ONE, I now proclaim ;
Found in no temple made with hands,
His works declare his name.

He bade this goodly frame exist,
He fixed the burning lamps on high ;
The Heavens confess him *Lord of All*,
Lord of *Eternity*.

We are his offspring, fruit divine ;
By what device, what sculpture spell,
Can we th' undreamed-of glory show,
Of GOD INVISIBLE.

'Midst mental gloom He saw ye grope,
Bewildered, blind, impenitent ;
A call to truth's deserted path,
He hath by JESUS sent.

From Heaven the glorious Judge came down,
Patient he was, enduring, lowly ;
He fell, but burst death's bands, and sought
The throne of the MOST HOLY.—J. W. DALBY.

Suffered Martyrdom, about A. D. 65.

THE Almighty, in choosing instruments to promote his cause in the world, calls, not alone the pious, who love his name and his employ ; no, he can press his most bitter foe into his service ; he can change the most furious persecutor of his church into its most zealous advocate. Such was the apostle Paul, whose conversion and future conduct may be adduced as an evidence of the Christian religion. This illustrious character, whose original name

was Saul, was born of Jewish parents at Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, a place noted for its academy, and for the privileges conferred thereon by Julius Cæsar and Augustus, and the natives of which enjoyed the honours and immunities of Roman citizens. Here he received his early education, after which he was sent to Jerusalem, where he had for his tutor the celebrated doctor, Gamaliel, under whom he acquired a knowledge of the law, the traditions of the elders, and the principles of the Pharisees, to which sect he was ardently attached. While, however, he was engaged in the pursuit of learning, in accordance with the custom of the Jews, he was employed also in acquiring the knowledge of a trade, which was that of a tent-maker.

In his speech before Agrippa, the apostle speaks of his early life, as a pattern of morality; "After the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee." But if with the Pharisee he was renowned for his moral rectitude of conduct, he was equally renowned with them for his enmity to Jesus and his followers; the very first notice we have of him is in the narrative of the martyrdom of Stephen, to whose death he was consenting, and at which he was taking the conspicuous part of keeping the raiment of the murderers; and soon after this tragic scene, having obtained a commission from the high priest, we find him travelling to Damascus, on the same daring errand, resolved to bring all the believers he could find, whether men or women, bound unto Jerusalem. But he was stopped in his career; as he journeyed onward, full of fury against those he sought, a supernatural light at noon, surpassing the brightness of the sun, shone upon him, and, filled with alarm, he fell prostrate on the earth. As he thus lay, a voice addressed him, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" this increased his alarm, and, desirous of knowing the meaning of the vision, he asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" and the voice replied, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." The sound of the name of Jesus, which, but a few minutes before, would have aroused his indignation, now seems to have levelled his pride and bigotry to

the very dust ; in profound humility he now asked, " Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?" in reply to which, he received a command to arise and go into the city, where he should receive further instructions. This command he attempted to obey, but when he arose from the earth he found that a miracle, in righteous judgment, had been wrought upon him,—he was blind ; his companions, therefore, led him into the city, where he continued in prayer and fasting three days. At the end of that time one Ananias was directed by a vision to go into such a house, where he would find Saul of Tarsus. This good man having heard of the deeds of the furious persecutor, and of the fatal commission he had received, was afraid to obey the command ; but his fears were soon dispelled, it was revealed to him that Saul was a chosen vessel, to bear the name of Jesus " before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel ;" Ananias accordingly went, and entering into the house, said, " Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." It happened as he said, and the new convert after having been baptized, went forth and preached in the synagogues that Jesus, whom once he persecuted, is the Son of God. This sudden change in the conduct of Paul astonished the people of Damascus, and many doubted his sincerity ; but he every day increased in spiritual strength, and was soon able to repel all the Jewish arguments, enforcing his own with such irresistible evidence, that they were not able to confute the proofs he adduced of Jesus being the Messiah.

The apostle seems to have laboured in Damascus three years after his conversion ; at the end of that time, enraged with the success he met with, the Jews laid a design against his life ; the disciples, however, discovered the plot, and conveyed him by night out of the city, and he returned to Jerusalem. His first object here was to join the Christian church, but remembering his former character, its members shunned him, till Barnabas bore testi-

mony to his zeal, and the success he had met with in preaching the Gospel. After which he preached the truth at Jerusalem, and he so signalized himself in all disputes with the Jews, that plots were again laid against his life, but the brethren conveyed him to Tarsus, the place of his birth. Here he was joined by Barnabas, whom he now accompanied to Antioch, where their united labours were eminently successful.

After Paul had been at Antioch about a year, some that had the gift of prophecy came thither by the appointment of the church, and one of them named Agabus, by revelation foretold that a famine would spread throughout the empire: this came to pass in the reign of the emperor Claudius, and the believers at Antioch raised large contributions for their brethren in Judea, which were sent to Jerusalem by the hands of Barnabas and Paul. On their return they were set apart, by the Divine command, to the important work of preaching the Gospel among the Gentiles; for which purpose they set out for Cilicia, from whence they sailed to Cyprus. Here, in the city of Paphos, they met with one Elymas, or Bar-jesus, the sorcerer, who, being intimate with Sergius Paulus, the governor, who was inclined to receive the doctrines they taught, did all he could to divert him from his purpose; but after they had inflicted a miraculous punishment upon the impostor, that of blindness, the governor was converted to the faith.

Having preached the Gospel with much success in Cyprus, the apostles came to Perga, in Pamphylia, and from thence to Antioch, a city of Pisidia. Here, as they were in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, the elders desired them to deliver a discourse to the people, and in a long oration, Paul rehearsed the goodness of God towards the Hebrew nation, and proved that Jesus was the Messiah whom the prophets and the Baptist had foretold, and called upon them to believe in his name. This discourse made a deep impression upon the hearers, and they were solicited to discourse again on the next Sabbath; the request was complied with, and the synagogue was so.

crowded with Gentiles, eager to hear the word of life, that the Jews were enraged thereat, and they contradicted the truth, and blasphemed the name of Jesus; but their opposition could not intimidate the apostles, they boldly declared that it was necessary, to fulfil the purposes of God, that the Gospel should be first preached to them, but since they rejected it, they would now turn to the Gentiles, as the Lord had commanded them. This declaration was attended with the most pleasing results; the Gentiles glorified the word of the Lord, and it was published with success through all that region; but the Jews, ever active in their opposition, prevailed upon the authorities to expel them from the country, and as they were driven out, they shook off the dust of their feet as a testimony against them.

The apostles now came to Iconium, where numbers, both Jews and Gentiles, were converted; here they remained some time, confirming their mission by many miracles; but here also they were persecuted by the Jews, and they were obliged to withdraw to Lystra. At this place they preached the Gospel, and while Paul was addressing his auditory, a lame man attracted his attention, and he healed him. This miracle so astonished the beholders, that, in their ignorance of the Almighty, they concluded that two of the superior gods had honoured them with a visit, and they gave Paul the name of Mercury, on account of his eloquence, and Barnabas the name of Jupiter, on account of his gravity. Nor was this all; in accordance with these ideas, the priests of Jupiter brought oxen adorned with garlands for a sacrifice to them; the apostles, however, prevented them from carrying their idolatrous designs into execution; they told them they were men like themselves, and entreated them to turn from such vanities, to serve the living God. But the reverence of the Lystrians for the apostles did not long continue; at the instigation of some unbelieving Jews, who came thither from Jerusalem, and who had heard of the miracle, they stoned Paul, and dragging him out of the city, left him for dead; but his work was not yet done, and till it was, no foe could rob

him of life ; as the disciples stood round him he revived, and the next day he went with Barnabas to Derbe.

After the apostles had preached the Gospel at Derbe, where many were converted to the faith, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia, at which places they confirmed those they had before baptized, telling them they must suffer much tribulation before they entered into the kingdom of heaven. They then came to Pamphylia, and having preached at Perga, they travelled to Attalia, from whence they came by sea again to Antioch, where they assembled the church, and related the wonders God had wrought by their hands.

About this time Paul and Barnabas were commissioned to go to Jerusalem, to sit at a council, called to settle a dispute which had arisen, touching the propriety of enforcing the ceremonial law upon all Gentile converts. At this council the apostles related what God had wrought among the nations by them, from which they argued that they were called to be partakers of his grace, without the imposition of such conditions ; their testimony and their arguments convinced the council that the burden of the law was destroyed, and Paul and Barnabas, with two others, named Barsabas and Silas, were sent to Antioch and the adjacent churches with the letter and deed of the council to that effect. It was shortly after this that the apostle rebuked Peter for his unfaithfulness in this matter.

A contention now arose between Paul and Barnabas, concerning the choice of a companion to accompany them in the visitation of the churches ; Barnabas insisted upon taking Mark, his cousin, and Paul as warmly insisted to the contrary, because he had deserted them on a former journey. This caused a separation ; Barnabas and Mark went to Cyprus, and Paul and Silas took their route towards Syria and Cilicia. Whilst they sojourned at Derbe and Lystra, Paul met with a disciple named Timothy, whose father was a Greek and his mother a Jewess. This young convert was held in great esteem at Lystra, and Paul after causing him to be circumcised, that he might be

the more acceptable to the Jews, took him as his companion, and they travelled together to Lycaonia, Phrygia, and Galatia, after which they came to Troas. At this place the apostle received the Divine direction in a vision to go to Macedonia to preach the Gospel, and he immediately obeyed the call; he embarked with his company for the island of Samothracia, and crossing over to Neapolis proceeded to Philippi, the principal city in that part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony. Here they remained some days, and on the Sabbath they went to a house of prayer which the Jews had erected on the margin of the river, where they found many women assembled, to whom they preached the Gospel, and Lydia, a native of Thyatira, with her whole household and many others were turned to the Lord, and were admitted into the Christian communion by baptism. At the house of Lydia, Paul and his companions, at her request, took up their abode.

During their sojourn at Philippi, Paul expelled a demon from a young woman who had brought much gain to her masters by her divinations, for which deed they suffered persecution; her masters enraged at their loss, out of revenge, took Paul and Silas before the governors, accusing them of introducing a new religion, and without making any inquiry into the matter, the magistrates caused them to be scourged and thrown into prison. But they were not cast down, nor were they forsaken; at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God, and while yet their petitions and their notes ascended on high, God appeared for their deliverance; an earthquake shook the prison, the doors flew open, and their chains were loosed. The gaoler in his first alarm concluded that his prisoners were fled, and apprehensive of punishment would have laid hands upon himself. Paul, however, prevented it by telling him his prisoners were secure; his fears now gave way to a feeling of reverence for his prisoners; calling for a light, he came trembling to them, and asked, "What shall I do to be saved?" and being directed to Jesus as the Saviour, he and all his house were converted and baptized.

When the morning came the magistrates sent an order to the gaoler to set the apostles at liberty, but Paul refused to depart thus secretly; he returned answer, that since they had beaten and imprisoned Roman citizens uncondemned, they should come and discharge them openly. At this reply the magistrates were alarmed, and came and begged pardon, and bringing them forth requested them to leave the city, to which the apostles consented, and saluting the brethren they departed for Thessalonica.

At this place Paul preached three Sabbath days in a Jewish synagogue, and many, both Jews and Greeks, were converted. Nevertheless a furious persecution was raised against him, and he was conducted under the cover of night to Berea. At this place the Jews had also a synagogue, in which Paul preached a crucified Redeemer; and the Bereans, more noble than those of Thessalonica, were stirred up to search for the truth of what he taught in the written word, the result of which inquiry was the conversion of many individuals of distinction. But they were again subjected to persecution, their enemies at Thessalonica followed them, and Paul withdrew to Athens.

While waiting here for Silas and Timothy, he preached in the synagogue, and disputed with the Stoics and Epicureans, from whom he met with insult, and by whom he was accused before the court of Areopagus as one who sought to introduce a new system of religion; but

This hostile throng dismays him not, he seems
As if no worldly object could inspire
A terror in his soul; as if the vision
Which, when he journeyed to Damascus, shone
From heaven, still swam before his eyes,
Out-dazzling all things earthly; as if the voice
That spake from out the effulgence, ever rang
Within his ear, inspiring him with words
Burning, majestic, lofty as his theme,—
The resurrection, and the life to come.—GRAHAM.

In the defence Paul made, he observed, that as he passed by and saw their devotions, he found an altar with this inscription: "To the unknown God;" then proceeding in his discourse, he treated of the perfections of the Almighty,

and showed that he could not be fitly represented by any image, graven by art or man's device, in proof of which he quoted a line from the poet Aratus, who wrote in Greek, and who was a native of Cilicia. The apostle then called them to repentance, telling them that God had appointed a day for judging the world by Jesus Christ who was raised from the dead. He had no sooner mentioned the resurrection from the dead than some of the philosophers ridiculed, and others said that they would hear him again on the subject. Dionysius, however, one of his judges, Damaris, a woman of rank, and other Athenians, were converted to the faith.

Leaving this seat of learning Paul now came to Corinth, where he resided with Aquila and Priscilla, two Jewish converts who had recently left Italy in consequence of the decree of Claudius Cæsar, who had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome. With these, Paul that he might not be burdensome to the disciples, wrought at the trade he had learned. In this city he preached with so much success as to lay the foundation of a flourishing church, and here he was delivered from persecution by the temperance of Gallio the proconsul, who when he was brought before him charged with being the ringleader of a new sect, wisely determined that a magistrate had no business to interfere with men's private religious opinions, and ordered his accusers to be driven from the court. During his stay at Corinth, which was about eighteen months, the apostle is supposed to have written the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, and the Epistle to the Galatians.

Paul accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla now went into Syria, and from thence to Ephesus, where his doctrine was well received. Entering into the synagogue he reasoned so forcibly with the Jews on the subject of Jesus being the Christ, that they desired him to tarry longer with them. He however declined their invitation, promising with the Divine permission that he would visit them at a future season; he then went up to Jerusalem to the passover, after which he returned to Antioch.

How long the apostle remained at Antioch we are not

informed; we find him, however, again on his travels to spread the glad tidings of salvation. He now went into Galatia and Phrygia, where he confirmed the faith of the disciples, after which he went to Ephesus; where his visit, which was prolonged to a two years' residence, was attended with many remarkable events. Soon after his arrival he met with twelve Jews who had been baptized by John, but who were unacquainted with the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost; these he baptized in the name of Jesus, and laying his hands upon them they received the gift of prophecy, and speaking with tongues. For three months he preached in the synagogue, alleging that Jesus is the Messiah, and that his reign had commenced; but finding the Jews obstinate, he taught daily in the school of one Tyrannus, a Gentile; and his ministry was so efficacious, that many were converted, and all the inhabitants of pro-consular Asia made acquainted with the word of Salvation.

But we must not suppose that he met with no opposition in his labours at Ephesus; no, the success he met with alarmed the artists, and Demetrius, a man of considerable influence, who employed many men in making small silver shrines which were models of the celebrated temple of the Ephesian Diana, raised such an insurrection against him that it was with difficulty quelled, and from which himself and Gaius and Aristarchus narrowly escaped with their lives. While at Ephesus Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he vindicated his character against false teachers, and which was sent by Titus and Luke, the former of whom had given him the information.

Soon after this transaction with Demetrius, the apostle taking leave of the disciples departed from Ephesus; passing through Troas in his way, he crossed the sea from thence to go into Macedonia, that he might visit the Philippians, Thessalonians, and Bereans. Having discharged his apostolic duties in Macedonia, he resided in the country of Achaia, where he is supposed to have written his second Epistle to the Corinthians and the first to Timothy.

Not long after this he visited Corinth, where he wrote his Epistle to the Romans, in which he discoursed of the justification of sinners, answered the objections raised against the Gospel doctrine of justification, proved from Moses and the prophets the calling of the Gentiles, the rejection of the Jews and their future restoration, and gave the brethren at Rome many precepts and exhortations suited to their particular circumstances.

Having received the collection which the brethren of Macedonia and Achaia had made for the poor in Judea, he took his route for Jerusalem through Macedonia, where either at Philippi or Neapolis he wrote his Epistle to Titus. Departing from thence he arrived at Troas, where he met with several brethren from different churches; here he continued seven days, and on the first day of the week, as he was about to depart on the morrow, he preached the word of life. His discourse was protracted till midnight, and a certain young man named Eutychus, overpowered with sleep, fell from the third story to the ground and was taken up dead. The apostle, however, embraced the youth, and by a miracle restored him to life; he then resumed his discourse, and concluded by administering the sacrament.

From Troas the apostle came to Miletus, to which place he sent for the elders of the church at Ephesus, whom he warned against the declensions of schismatics, and having exhorted them to patience and faithfulness, he prayed with them and took his leave of them; their parting was very affectionate, they wept upon him and kissed him, sorrowing that they should no more behold his face.

After touching at Coos, and Rhodes, and Patara, the apostle landed at Tyre, from whence he went to Cesarea. During his stay at this place, Agabus, an eminent prophet, came down from Judea, and taking Paul's girdle, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." This prophecy so distressed the disciples, that they earnestly entreated him not to pursue his journey; but all undaunted, he told them that he was ready not

only to be bound, but to die, at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. Finding him resolved to follow the path of duty they ceased their entreaties, and resigned him into the hands of a gracious Providence, saying, "The will of the Lord be done;" after which he proceeded to Jerusalem, and abode with one Mnason, an old disciple.

So blind is man to the contingencies of human life, that the means we devise for our safety frequently bring us into danger. The brethren at Jerusalem, anxious for his safety, knowing the prejudice many entertained against him as an enemy of the ceremonial law, advised him to unite with four others in the performance of a vow. Accordingly, the apostle the next day, after being legally purified, presented himself in the temple to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until an offering should be sacrificed for each according to the law of Moses; but he had no sooner appeared there, than some of the Jews from Lesser Asia cried for help to apprehend him as one who had everywhere taught the abolition of the law, and had brought Greeks into the temple to defile it. So violent was the commotion among the people that they would have put him to death, had not Claudius Lysias the chief captain rescued him from their violence and conveyed him to the castle of Antonia, whither he was followed by the multitude. As he was about to be placed in confinement the apostle solicited leave to address the people, and being permitted, making a signal with his hand they listened to him with attention. He rehearsed to them in the Hebrew language his former zeal for the customs of the Jewish religion, and his former rage against the Christians, of which the Sanhedrim themselves were witnesses. He then proceeded to relate the manner of his conversion, and boldly avowed his commission to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles; but he had no sooner made this declaration than the prejudice of the Jews was again awakened, and they drowned his voice with their clamorous demands for vengeance. The Roman, probably not understanding the purport of Paul's defence, and supposing from the violence of the Jews that he was a malefactor, commanded that h'

confession should be extorted by scourging. Paul, however, claiming the privileges of a Roman citizen, escaped this treatment, and by passing a night in the fortress, found an asylum from the fury of his persecutors.

The next morning the apostle was brought before the Sanhedrim, where he began his speech by affirming that he had always studied to live blameless before God and man. This was considered by Ananias to be an insult to the council, and therefore he commanded those who stood near, to smite him on the mouth. To this, the intrepid apostle, knowing that it was contrary to the laws of his country, indignantly replied, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" The bystanders hearing this, reprov'd him for railing against the high priest, on which he excused himself, by pleading ignorance of his office. He now proceeded in his discourse, and perceiving the assembly was composed of both Pharisees and Sadducees, he took advantage of the circumstance, by declaring that he was a Pharisee, and that he was called to account touching the hope and resurrection of the dead. This occasioned a dissension in the council: the Pharisees declared in his favour, while the Sadducees violently opposed them. In the midst of this confusion, Lysias, fearing some mischief would happen to Paul, caused him to be taken back to the castle. The same night the Lord appeared to him in a vision, and encouraged him, assuring him that he should live and be a witness to the truth at Rome.

In the mean time, forty Jews had laid a plot for his destruction, binding themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had accomplished their purpose. To this project the rulers agreed, and in order to afford them an opportunity, promised they would solicit a further examination; but they were disappointed. The conspiracy was discovered by Paul's nephew, and he was sent by Lysias under guard to Felix, the governor at Cesarea.

After Paul had been confined in Herod's judgment-hall

about five days, Ananias the high priest, with the elders, and Tertullus an advocate, came down to Cesarea, to carry on a prosecution against him. Tertullus commenced his oration with a flattering address to Felix, and concluded by accusing Paul with being the ringleader of a seditious faction, and with profaning the temple. The apostle having permission to speak :—

Dauntless he forward came, and looked around,
And raised his voice, at first in accents low,
Yet clear. A whisper spread among the throng :—
So when the thunder mutters, still the breeze
Is heard at times to sigh ; but when the peal
Tremendous, louder rolls, a silence dead
Succeeds each pause :—moveless the aspen leaf.
Thus fixed and motionless, the listening band
Of soldiers forward leaned, as from the man,
Inspired of God, truth's awful thunders rolled.
No more he feels upon his high-raised arm
The ponderous chain, than does the playful child
The bracelet formed of many a flowery link.

The apostle so ably defended himself from the charges brought against him, that Felix dismissed his accusers, alleging that he must confer with the chief captain, ere he could decide the cause. In the mean time, he was sent for by the governor, to explain to him and Drusilla, (who was a Jewess,) the doctrines of the Gospel. The character of these persons, who were living in adultery, was not unknown to Paul, and he therefore addressed them in a manner most likely to impress their minds. Nor was he disappointed, for

. While he reasoned high
Of temperance, judgment, and the life to come,
The judge shrank trembling at the prisoner's voice.—GRAHAM.

But conviction did not bring repentance ; Paul was dismissed with the promise, that when a convenient season offered itself to hear him again, it should be embraced. That season, however, never arrived ; for though Felix often freely conversed with him, it was not upon the subject of religion, but in the hope of obtaining a ransom for his release.

For two years was Paul kept in chains by this avaricious governor: at the end of that time, Felix was succeeded in the government by Porcius Festus, on whose arrival at Jerusalem, the Sanhedrim requested that Paul might be brought again for trial, designing his destruction by the way. The governor, however, refused to examine him at any other place than Cesarea. To this place, therefore, the Jews again resorted with their accusations, all of which, the apostle answered to the governor satisfactorily: nevertheless, as it was his interest to please the Jews, he did so as far as he could. He demanded of Paul whether he would go to Jerusalem, and be tried before him there. This (being acquainted with the purpose of his foes, the Jews,) he refused, and appealed unto Cæsar; a privilege to which all Roman citizens were entitled; Festus, therefore, declared his intention of sending him to Rome.

Not long after this, Agrippa, the tetrarch of Galilee, and his sister Bernice, came to Cesarea to congratulate Festus on his appointment; and the case of Paul being made known to him, he expressed a desire to hear him. Accordingly, the apostle was brought the next morning into court, where he was directed by Agrippa to speak for himself; and, in a most eloquent address, he narrated the manner of his former life, his miraculous conversion, and his subsequent conduct. He then observed, that these were the only causes for the hatred of the Jews, and for their attempts upon his life: after which, in strains of pious gratitude, he spake of the aid he had received from Divine providence, through which alone he was alive and able to declare salvation to the Jew and the Gentile, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Festus had no sooner heard of the resurrection, than he concluded the whole to be a fiction, which proceeded from an overheated brain. "Paul," said he, "thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." The apostle, however, making allowance for the infidelity of a heathen, firmly, but respectfully replied, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and

soberness." He then appealed to Agrippa, for the truth of what he had asserted concerning the resurrection of Jesus, and having established the fact, which the king could not deny, he put this solemn question to him: "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." The answer of Agrippa was both candid and interesting; "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Paul, powerfully struck with the acknowledgement, with fervour of spirit, yet with decency replied, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." When the court retired, Agrippa gave it as his opinion, that he might have been set at liberty, "if he had not appealed unto Cæsar."

The apostle was now placed, with other prisoners, under the care of Julius, the centurion of a legion distinguished by the name of Augustus, and sent to Rome. They embarked in a ship of Adramyttium, a sea-port in Mysia, and steering their course northward from Cesarea, they reached Sidon, a celebrated city on the Phœnician shore. Here the centurion treated Paul with peculiar kindness, allowing him to visit his friends. Sailing from thence, they came to Cyprus; and when they came to Myra, a sea-port of Lycia, they were put into a ship of Alexandria, that was bound for Rome, from whence they came to the Fair Havens, a port in Crete. The apostle perceiving that the tempestuous season was approaching, advised the centurion to winter there, but he was resolved to steer for Phenice, a more convenient harbour. The weather at first was favourable, but it soon changed. A violent storm overtook them, and after being tossed by the waves for fourteen days, the ship was wrecked upon the island of Melita, where every person landed in safety, according to the apostle's prediction.

The inhabitants of Melita were heathens, but they knew how to treat the distressed: they received them kindly, and kindled a fire for them because of the rain which followed the storm, and the cold with which they were

almost ready to perish. At this place a remarkable incident occurred to the apostle. As they were standing round the fire, a viper, which had lain concealed among the wood, upon feeling the heat, came out and fastened upon his hand. This the islanders saw, and they immediately concluded that he was a murderer, pursued by Divine vengeance, though he had escaped a watery grave. But when Paul, unharmed, shook off the reptile, their sentiments were altered; they looked upon him as a deity, over whom, neither the watery elements, or envenomed reptiles, had power. During his stay at Melita, the apostle wrought a miraculous cure upon the father of the governor, the fame of which spread so far, that numbers came to him and were healed.

At the end of three months, they re-embarked, and not long after, they reached the island of Sicily, and having arrived at Syracuse, the most considerable city of that island, they continued there three days. From thence they coasted along the eastern shore of Sicily, and came over against the city and promontory of Rhegium, in the south of Italy; and after remaining one day, being favoured with a southerly gale, they pursued their voyage, and came in two days to Puteoli, not far from Naples. Here they remained seven days to enjoy the company of some Christian brethren, and they then proceeded the rest of their way to Rome by land.

The news of the apostle's arrival soon reached the city, and many hastened to meet him; some coming as far as Appii Forum, which was fifty-three miles, and others to the Three Taverns, which was thirty-three miles from Rome. These related to Paul the increased spread of the Church, and the liberty the Christians enjoyed, for which he thanked God and took courage. When they arrived at Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul, probably through the intercession of Julius, was suffered to dwell by himself with only one soldier that kept him, with liberty to preach the Gospel to all who were inclined to come and hear him.

When the apostle had been at Rome three days, ardently longing for the salvation of his countrymen, he sent a message to the heads of the Jewish consistory inviting them to his house, to acquaint them with the cause of his coming to Rome. They replied, that no information concerning him had reached them, and that nothing had been said to his disadvantage by the brethren who came from Judea, and desirous of hearing him, they assembled at his house early in the morning, and the apostle, till the shades of evening appeared, expounded the Scriptures concerning the Messiah, both from the law and the prophets. Some were converted by this discourse, but others remained so hardened in their infidelity, that he dismissed them with this most solemn reproof: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing, ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing, ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

After their departure, they had much disputation among themselves. Paul, however, employed himself more profitably in preaching the Gospel to all who came to him, and that without molestation. Many were converted, among whom were some of Cæsar's household. Nor did he content himself with his daily exercise of preaching; such was his active zeal, that during the time of his imprisonment, he wrote some of his most excellent Epistles, in which the doctrines and duties of religion are explained and inculcated in the most appropriate language, and in the most zealous and faithful manner. In them, also, we may trace his love to those he had converted to the faith, a very pleasing trait in his high character, and worthy the imitation of all Christian ministers.

Whether the apostle was brought before the emperor during his stay at Rome; whether, after his two years'

confinement in his house, he went to Spain, or Macedonia, as Clemens his associate would intimate; or whether he was made a close prisoner, cannot be determined, as Scripture, after this, is silent concerning his history. Thus much, however, is certain, that in the general persecution of the Christians by Nero, he was at Rome, where, it is related, he was confined in the same prison with Peter, and converted three of his guards. At length he suffered martyrdom; at a place called the Salvian Waters, about three miles from the city, he submitted to the stroke of the executioner, and exchanged a life of trouble for immortal felicity. His body was interred in the Ostium Way, and Constantine the Great erected a church over the spot.

Thus died this great apostle of the Gentiles, who before his conversion was the most bitter enemy of the Saviour, but who afterwards was one of the most holy and humble men, and laborious preachers of the Gospel, that ever breathed. Nor does his magnifying his office and labours prove him otherwise, as some have maintained. No; while he boasted of these in opposition to deceivers and schismatics, he therein confutes their arguments against the Gospel, and invariably ascribes all he was, and all he had done in his Master's cause, to sovereign grace. Thus may we do in our various stations, that in the prospect of death, we may be able to adopt the emphatic and triumphant language he made use of in the prospect of martyrdom:—"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

THE END.

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